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URITH: A TALE OF DARTMOOR.

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URITH

A TALE OF DARTMOOR

BY

S. BARING GOULD, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "MEHALAH," "JOHN HERRING," "COURT ROYAL," ETC.

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URITH: A TALE OF DARTMOOR.

CHAPTER XX.

A BLOODY HAND.

The effect on Anthony's horse was instantaneous. With a snort it bounded into the air, threw back its head, then kicked out and began to dance and revolve, put its head down between the forelegs, then reared into the air, every violent motion fanning the burning bunch of amadou into stronger heat.

Anthony was taken by surprise, but maintained his seat. The horse quickly scattered those around. One man, struck by the hoofs, was drawn away in a state of unconsciousness. Some men were driven in among the enclosed ponies, but quickly ran

away; and, in less time than it takes to write, the circle of lookers-on had reformed, enclosing Anthony on his maddened steed in the same arena with the wild cobs and colts.

A scene of indescribable confusion ensued. The tortured horse bounded in among the throng of ponies, and threw them, if possible, into wilder disorder. All that could be seen for some moments was a tumult of heads, flying manes, hoofs, beasts leaping on and over each other, and Anthony with difficulty, and in extreme danger, carried up and down above the sea of horses' heads and heels. If he had fallen, his brains would have been dashed out in one minute. He knew this, and endeavoured to force his horse by rein and deep spur out of the tangle; but, agonized by the fire in its ear, it disregarded rein and spur. Of its own accord, however, it disengaged itself, or by chance found itself free for an instant from the surrounding tossing, plunging mass of its fellows; and then, with a scream rather than a snort, it dashed among the surrounding men. They divided at once—not a man ventured forward to catch the rein and stay the mad beast.

In front was the river, with the low wall of the bridge over it, and under the arch, among huge masses of granite, leaped, and roared, and tumbled the Walla, as mad as the frightened moorland ponies—of a rich brown, but transparent, colour, where not whipped into foam.

Anthony's horse was dashing at the wall. The brute's head was now round biting itself, then down between its fore-hoofs, in a frantic paroxysm of kicks. Then it rushed forward, halted, spun round, then leaped with all four feet into the air, uttering screams. Every one was cowed—no one dared approach, and yet the situation of Anthony was critical. Another bound, maybe, and his horse would be over the wall, and roll with him among the masses of rock as big as haystacks, over and among which the river dashed itself to threads and flakes of foam, or went down into one of the wine-dark pools, where the eddies swirled and dissolved their foam before taking another leap.

Instinctively, overawed by one of those waves of feeling which come on men and beasts alike, all sounds ceased, the men no longer spoke, nor did the dogs bark. Only the churning of the colts' and ponies' feet

was heard within the living ring of men, and the tinkle, tinkle, tinkle of a sheep-bell beyond the river.

The horse was rearing to leap.

At that moment—a shot, and the horse fell like lead. Urith had snatched the pistol from the holster of her uncle's saddle, had leaped to the ground, run forward, and fired.

Silence remained as unbroken as before, save for the tinkle of the sheep-bell, till Anthony disengaged himself from his fallen horse, stood up, shook himself, and then a cheer burst from all the men present, who pressed forward to congratulate him.

"Stay!" said Urith, still on the bridge, and with the pistol in her hand. She was white with emotion, and her eyes flaming with wrath. "Listen to me—you—all of you. I saw him do it—I saw him light a ball of tinder and thrust it into the horse's ear, to drive the beast mad."

She looked round—her flashing eyes sought out him of whom she spoke.

"I saw him do it, when all were looking elsewhere after their cobs. He hated him, and he sought this mean, this cruel, this treacherous revenge on him."

"Take him!" she cried. "He deserves it. Take him and fling him among the horses, and let them trample him down into the dirt. The man who did what he has done deserves no better."

"Who!—who!—name!" shouted the bystanders.

"Who it was who did this? Did I not name him? It is he." She had caught sight of him with his bandaged eye. "Bring him forward—Fox Crymes."

In a moment Fox was hustled forth out of the throng into the foreground.

"I would," gasped Urith, in quivering fury, "that I had another pistol, and I would shoot you, as I have the horse, base vile coward."

Fox looked at her contemptuously out of his one eye. "It is well that none is in your hand—a maniac should not be trusted with firearms, or should practise them on herself."

"What has he done?" shouted Farmer Cudlip. "What is the charge against him?"

"I say," answered Urith, "that whilst all were engaged looking for their colts, I saw him light a piece of tinder with flint and

steel, and then thrust it into the ear of the horse."

Silence followed this announcement. The men had been too surprised to follow her charge when first made.

"What do you say to that, Master Crymes?" asked Cudlip.

"It is a lie," retorted Fox. "She did it herself so as to make a spectacle and appear as the preserver of her lover."

Again silence, save only for the trampling of the enringed ponies. The sheep-bell had ceased; maybe, the sheep that bore the bell was lying down.

Urith spoke slowly, in her deepest tones.

"On the moor there is no law—or only the plain law of God that all can understand and obey. He is a murderer in heart. He tried to kill Anthony Cleverdon, and now he— coward that he is—insults me. Take him up and throw him among the horses."

At once a score of hands were laid on Fox Crymes. It was true, there was no law on the moor. There every man was a law unto himself. The Stannary Court sat but once in the year on the top of one of the central Tors, but that took cognizance of offences against the mining laws only. There was no

criminal jurisdiction over the moor lodged anywhere—or, it was supposed that there was none. But then—crime was unknown on Dartmoor.

When an act of violence is to be done, especially when sanctioned by some rough rule of justice, there is no lack of hands to commit it.

Fox Crymes was generally disliked, his stinging tongue, his lack of genialty had alienated every acquaintance from him; the farmers present were rude men of the moor confines, brought under little or no control, kings on their own estates, and free of the moor to do thereon what they listed, take thence what they desired, fight thereon any with whom they were at feud, avenge themselves with their own arms for any wrong done to them. Never had a lawyer been invoked to unravel a doubtful claim, or to settle a dispute. Every knot was, if not cut through with a sword, at all events beaten out with the quarterstaff; and every dispute brought to an end by silencing one side with a bludgeon or a pistol.

In one moment, Fox Crymes was caught up, with a roar of many voices giving consent to the execution of the sentence

pronounced by Urith, at once accuser and judge.

"Hold off!" cried Fox, and drew his knife; freeing himself by a twist of the body from those who held him, and who shrank back at the flash of steel.

His one eye glared. "I will drive it up to the haft in the first man who touches me!" he said.

"Strike it out o' his hand!" shouted Cudlip.

Fox stabbing with his blade to right and left backed from his assailants towards the wall. Cudgels were raised and aimed at him, but he dexterously withdrew his arm as each descended. The sight of the drawn weapon kindled the blood of the moormen, and those who held back at first, now pressed forward to take him.

A shout! the colts and horses had made a rush, a dash, and had broken through the ring. It was quickly reformed, and away after those who had escaped rushed some of the men with their whips whirled about their heads.

This caused a momentary diversion: Anthony took advantage to leave his place by the fallen horse, come forward, and with

his elbows force his way through to Crymes, and then, planting himself between Fox and his assailants, he shouted:

"No harm has been done. It was a joke. He and I had sport together, and I hit him in the eye and hurt him; he knows I never designed to injure him. Now he tried a merry prank on me. He designed no hurt to me—but it has gone further than he would, as did mine with him. Hands off—here Fox, show them we bear each other no malice—here, before all, give me your right hand, good friend."

Crymes held back.

Cudgels were lowered, and the men drew away.

Fox slipped his hunting knife up his sleeve, and sullenly extended his arm.

"You see!" called Anthony, looking round, and not regarding Crymes. "You see! We are good friends, and hearty comrades."

Then he clasped the right hand of Fox. As he did so, the blade slipped down the sleeve into the hand of Crymes, and as Anthony clenched his fingers about those of Fox, they closed on the blade in his hand, which was keen, and cut. He felt the knife,

but he did not relax his grasp, and when he drew his hand away it was covered with blood.

"It was a mischance," said Crymes, with a malicious laugh. "You did not give me time to sheath the knife."

"Many a mischance falls between us," answered Anthony, hastily, drawing his glove over the wounded hand, lest it should attract attention.

Then he strode up to Urith, who stood palpitating near.

"I have saved you from yourself to-day," he said.

"Yes—I thank you."

"You can thank me but in one way.'

"How so?"

"Give me your hand. Take me for ever."

She put her hand into his: "I cannot help myself," she said, in a low tone, "Oh, mother, forgive."

Then she loosed her hand, looked on it and said, "There is blood!"

The blood had oozed through his glove.

"It is my blood," answered Anthony, "on your hand."

CHAPTER XXI.

FIXED.

Squire Cleverdon gave no token of relenting towards his son. Bessie had her brother's interests so at heart that she ventured, without sufficient tact, to approach him on the subject, but was roughly repelled. The old man was irritated when she spoke, and irritated when she was silent; for then her eyes appealed to him in behalf of Anthony. The father held out, believing that by so doing he would break down Anthony's resolution. He did not believe in the power of love, for he had never experienced love. His son had taken a fancy, a perverse fancy for this Urith, as a child might take a fancy for a new toy. When the lad had had time to feel how ill it was to be an exile from his father's house, without money, without authority over

serving-men, hampered and clipped in every direction and on all sides, he would come to a better sense, laugh at his folly, and return to obedience to his father and to the suit for Julian Crymes of Kilworthy.

His heart overflowed with gall against Urith. The thought of having a poor daughter-in-law could never have been other than distasteful to him, when he had set his mind on the wealthy Julian; but there were special reasons which made the acceptance of Urith impossible to him. She was the daughter of the man over whom he had gained a triumph in the eyes of theworld, but it was a triumph full of shame and vexation to himself inwardly. It was due to that man that his married life had been one of almost intolerable wretchedness. Not for a moment did he consider himself to blame in the matter; he cast all the responsibility for his unhappiness on Richard Malvine; on him he heaped all the hate that flamed out of envy at the personal superiority of the latter, jealousy because he had won the heart of his wife, and held it so firm that he—Anthony Cleverdon—had never been able to disengage it and attach it to himself; revenge for all the slights and insults he

had received from her unsparing, barbed tongue, slights and insults she had known well how to administer, so as to leave rankling wounds which no time would heal. Even now, as he brooded over his quarrel with Anthony, the sneers, the mockery she had launched at him for his meanness, his pride, his ambition, rose up fresh in his memory charged with new poison, and rankled in him again. But he did not feel anger against his dead wife for that, but against him who had used her as his instrument for torturing him; and as Richard Malvine was dead, he could but retaliate on his daughter.

Old Cleverdon attributed the worst motives to Urith. Margaret Penrose had married him for his money, and, naturally, Urith Malvine compassed the capture of Anthony, his son, for the same reason; he did not see how he involved himself in contradiction in that he charged Urith with her attempt to become the wife of his son for the sake of his wealth, as if it were a deadly crime, whilst he himself acted on no other motive than ambition and money-greed. She had entangled the young fellow in her net, and he would tear this net to pieces

and release him. He would break down his son's opposition. He was not one to be defeated in what he took in hand, and no better means could be chosen by him for his purpose than making Anthony feel what poverty and banishment signified. Anthony had hitherto had at command what money he needed, and now to be with empty pockets would speedily bring him to reason. To attempt gentle means with his son never occurred to him; he had been accustomed to command, not to persuade. He became harder, more reserved, and colder than before; and Bessie in vain looked for a gentle light to come into his steely eyes, a quiver to come on his firm-set lips, and a token of yielding to flicker over his inflexible features.

And yet the old man felt the absence of his son, and had little sleep at night thinking of him; but never for one moment did he suppose that he would not in the end triumph over his son's whim, and bring the young man back in submission to his usual place.

Luke had been to Hall to see his uncle, in behalf of, but without the knowledge of, young Anthony.

"Oh! tired of keeping him, are you?" asked the old Squire. "Then turn him out of the parsonage. I shall be the better pleased; so will he be the sooner brought to a right mind."

Nothing was effected by this visit. After it, with bent head, full of thought, Luke took his way to Willsworthy. On entering the house, he found Anthony there, in the hall, with Urith and Uncle Solomon, the latter on the settle smoking, with a table before him on which stood cider. The light from the window was full and strong on the toper's face, showing its blotched complexion. Mr. Gibbs appeared to his best when partially shaded, just as a lady nowadays assumes a gauze veil to soften certain harshnesses in her features.

"I saddled my horse and away I did ride
Till I came to an ale-house hard by the roadside.
I called for a glass of ale humming and brown,
And hard by the fireside I sat myself down,
Singing tol-de-rol-de-rol, tol-de-rol-dee,
And I in my pocket had one penny!"

Uncle Sol sang in subdued tones till he came to the tol-de-rol! when he drew the pipe from the corner of his mouth and sang

aloud, rattling his glass on the table. He was not intoxicated, but in that happy, hilarious mood which was his wont, even out of his cups.

"Oh, uncle! do be silent," pleaded Urith. "Here comes Mr. Luke, and we want to talk of serious matters, and not of——"

"I in my pocket had one penny!" shouted Uncle Sol, diving into the depths of his pouch and producing the coin in question, which he held out in his open palm; "never got more—never from this confounded place. Squeeze, squeeze, and out comes one penny. Never more. If Anthony can do better with it, let him try. I have done my utmost, toiled and moiled, and at the end of all these years I in my pocket have one penny:

> I tarried all night, and I parted next day;
> Thinks I to myself, I'll be jogging away—

but you won't send me off with in my pocket but one penny?"

"We will not send you off at all, uncle," said Urith. "But here is Master Luke. Let us talk the matter over with seriousness, and without snatches of song."

"I can't help myself, I must sing," said Mr. Gibbs. "You say on, and I will warble to myself. It is your affair rather than mine."

Luke looked at Anthony and Urith, who stood near each other. He folded his hands behind his back, that he might conceal the nervous twitching of his fingers.

"What is it, Anthony?" he asked.

"Luke, we want your help. I know very well that this is early times since the death of Urith's mother; but that cannot be helped. I cannot live on upon you longer. You are poor and——"

"I grudge you nothing that I have."

"I have a vast appetite. Besides, I like to have money of my own to spend; and I am not like Mr. Solomon Gibbs, who has in his pocket one penny, for I have none."

"I will give you what I can."

"I will not take it, Luke; what I have and spend shall be mine own. So Urith and I will ask you to make us one, and give me a right to a penny or two."

Luke was confounded; this was acting with precipitation, indeed. He quite understood that Squire Cleverdon would not receive Urith as a daughter-in-law with

open arms, and that he would oppose such an alliance by all means in his power. Like Anthony, he supposed that the old man's violence of language and threats of disinheritance meant nothing. He would cut off his right hand rather than give up his ambitions set upon his son. But in the end he would yield to the inevitable, if inevitable this were. But this haste of Anthony in precipitating the marriage, in disregard to all decency, must incense the old father, and, if anything could do so, drive him to act upon his word.

Luke became, if possible, graver; the lines in his face deepened. He withdrew his hands from behind his back.

"Anthony," said he, "this will not do. You are acting with your usual hotheadedness. You have angered your father, and must seek reconciliation and abatement of his wrath, before you take such a step as this."

"I said so," threw in Urith.

"My father never will yield so long as he thinks that I may be brought to change my mind. When he finds that I have taken the irrevocable step, then he will buckle under."

"And is it for the son to bid the father

do this?" asked Luke, with some warmth. "No, I will be no party to this," he added, firmly, and set his thin lips together.

"I love her, and she loves me; we cannot live apart. God has made us for each other," said Anthony; "my father can't alter that; it is God's will."

Luke did not meet Anthony's glowing eyes, his were resting on the ground. He thought of his own love, and his own desolate heart. For a moment the bitterness therein overflowed; he looked up sharply, to speak sharply, and then his eyes fell on the two young things—Anthony big, sturdy, wondrously handsome, and full of joyous life, and at his side Urith, in her almost masculine and sullen beauty. Yes, they were as though made for each other—the bright, light temper to be conjoined to the dark and sombre one, each qualifying, correcting the exuberance in the other, each in some sort supplementing the deficiences in the other. The harsh words that were on his lips remained unspoken. On the settle Uncle Sol was murmuring his tune to himself, every now and then breaking forth into a louder gush of song, and then at once suppressing it again.

Perhaps it was God's will these two should belong to each other; perhaps the old hostility, and wrath, and envy that had embittered the lives of their several parents were to be atoned for by the mutual love of the children. Luke was too true a Christian to believe that the words of hate that had shot like fire-coals from a volcano out of the mouth of Madam Malvine, when dying, could avail aught now. In the better light into which she had passed, as he trusted, in the world of clearer vision and extinguished animosity, of all-enwrapping charity, she must, with inner anguish, repent, and desire to have unsaid those terrible words. The dying utterances of the woman did not weigh with Luke, or, if they had any weight, it was to turn the scale against them. No better comfort to the soul of the dead could be given than the certainty that those words had been reversed and cast aside. Luke passed his hands over his brow, and then said, "I will see your father again, Anthony."

"That will avail nothing; you have spoken with him already. I tell you he will not alter till he sees that his present conduct does not affect me. What can he say or do

after I am married? He may, indeed, cut me off with a shilling; but he will not do that. He loves me too well. He is too proud of having founded a family to slay his firstborn. Whom could he make his heir but me? You do not suppose he would leave all to you?"

"No," answered Luke. "If he did—as an extreme measure—it would all come to you. I would not keep one penny of it."

"And I in my pocket——"

"Do be quiet, uncle!" pleaded Urith.

"Then what *can* he do? He must come round. He is as certain to come round as is the sun that sets every evening in the west."

"I hope so."

"I am sure of it. I know my father better than you do, Luke. See here. Urith has Mr. Solomon Gibbs as her guardian, and he is quite willing."

"Oh, heartily!—heartily!" shouted Mr. Gibbs. "I'm quite incompetent to guardian any one, especially such a defiant little devil as my niece. She snaps her fingers in my face."

Luke stood biting his thumb.

He was fully confident as was Anthony

that the old man would not leave Hall away from his son. He might be angry, and incensed against Anthony; but his pride in the family position which he had won would never suffer him to disinherit his son, and leave the estate away from him—away from the name.

"I cannot—I cannot!" exclaimed Luke, with pain in his tone, for he felt that it was too great a sacrifice to be required of him that he should pronounce the nuptial blessing over Anthony and Urith. He laboured for breath. His brow was beaded with sweat. His pale face flushed.

"Anthony! this is unconsidered. You must postpone all thought of marriage to a later season. Consider that Urith's mother is but recently dead."

"I know it; but whether now or in three months, or three years, it makes no matter—I shall love her all the same, and we belong to each other. But, see you, Luke, I cannot go on three years—nay, nor three months, and hardly three weeks—without an occupation, and without money, and without a position. I am as impatient as you are for my reconciliation with my father. But we can be reconciled in one

way only—through Urith's wedding-ring. Through that we will clasp hands. The longer the delay, the longer the enstrangement, and the longer does my father harbour his delusion. If you will not marry me at once to Urith——"

"That I will not."

"Then I shall remain here, and work for her as her steward, look after the farm and the estate, and put it straight for her. Why, this is the time of all the year of the greatest importance to a farmer—the time that my direction is most necessary. I tell you, Luke, I stay here, either as her husband or as her steward."

"That cannot be, that must not be," said Luke, with heat, "and that Urith herself must feel."

Urith did feel it. But Urith's mind was disturbed by what had taken place. She had no knowledge of the world, and Anthony's arguments had seemed to her conclusive, so conclusive as to over-ride her own repugnance to an immediate marriage. She had resolved to give him up altogether, and yet she had yielded; that resolve had gone to pieces. She had resolved that if she did take him it should be at some time

in the future, but when he pointed out to her that his only chance of reconciliation with his father was through marriage, as to abandon her was an impossible alternative, and that he was absolutely without work, without a position, without means—sponging on his cousin, a poor curate, then she saw that this, her second resolve, must go to pieces, like the first.

"Anthony," said Luke; "you will have to go away for a year—for some months at the least."

"Whither?—To whom?"

"Surely Justice Crymes knows of——"

"How can I accept any help from him when I refuse his daughter, and when I have blinded his son?"

"That is true—and your mother had no relatives?"

"None that I know of but my grandmother, who is with you."

"Then go to sea."

"I have no taste to be a sailor."

"Be a soldier?"

"No, Luke, here I can serve Urith—save Willsworthy from going to destruction. It is not a bad estate, but has been mismanaged. Here I can be of utility, and

here I can be a help to Urith, and find work that suits me, and which I understand. It seems plain to me that Willsworthy is crying out for me to come and take it in hand; and, unless it be taken in hand at once, a whole year is lost."

"That is true," threw in Solomon Gibbs, whose great eagerness now was to be disembarrassed of a task that was irksome to him, and obligations that were a burden. "You see, I was never reared to the farm, but to the office. I can draw you a lease, but not a furrow; make a settlement, but not a turf-tye. I wash my hands of it all."

"Then, in God's name," said Luke, in grey pallor, and with quivering features, "if it must be, then so be it. May be His finger points the way. As you will. I am at your service—but not for one month. Concede me that."

"From to-day," said Anthony. "So be it. That is fixed."

CHAPTER XXII.

BANNS.

Sunday morning. A more idyllic and peaceful scene than Peter Tavy Church on Sunday could hardly be found. The grand old granite church with its bold grey tower and rich pinnacles standing among trees, now bursting into leaf; overhead, the soaring moors strewn with rock; the river or brook bounding, brawling down between the hills, with a pleasant rush that filled the air with a fresh, never-failing music.

The rooks cawing, peewits calling, larks trilling, wood-pigeons cooing, and the blackbirds piping during the pauses of the church-bells. And within the church, after the service had begun, when the psalm was not sung, as an accompaniment to the parson's prayer came in through the open door, with the sweet spring air and the

sunlight, and through the ill-set and cracked wavy-green glass of the windows—that wondrous concert of Nature. As an organist sometimes accompanies the Confession and the Creed and Lord's Prayer, with a subdued change of harmonies on the instrument, so did mighty awakening Nature give its changing burden to this voice of prayer within, without a discord, and never unduly loud.

A quaint old church, with fragments of stained glass in the windows, with old oak carved benches representing on shields various strange sea monsters, also rabbits running in and out of their holes, moor-birds fluttering over their young, and along with these symbols of trade, a spit with a goose on it, a flax-beating rack, a sheaf of wheat and a sickle, and again the instruments of our Lord's Passion, and armorial bearings of ancient families, a queer jumble of sacred and profane, a picture of human life. The screen existed almost intact, richly sculptured and gilt, and painted with the saints and apostles. Above this a great Royal Arms.

The church was full. In the great carved pew, mentioned in a former chapter, were

the Crymes family; in another, newly erected, were Squire Cleverdon and his daughter. Urith and her uncle sat in the old bench belonging to the Willsworthy Manor; the family had not had the stray cash at command to replace this with a deal pew, according to the new fashion. Anthony was within the screen, in the rectory seat.

Looking through the screen, he could see his father, with his blue coat—the collar dusted over with powder—his dark eyebrows and sharp features. The old man looked straight before him, and purposely kept his eyes away from the chancel and his son when he stood up during Psalms and Creed.

The Second Lesson was read, and then ensued a pause. Even Anthony's heart gave a leap and flutter then, for he knew what was to follow.

Luke, in distinct tones, but with a voice in which was a slight tremor, announced: "I publish the banns of marriage between Anthony Cleverdon, of this parish, bachelor, and Urith Malvine——"

He was interrupted by a strange noise—something between a cry of pain and the laugh of a madman. Squire Cleverdon, who

had risen to his feet at the conclusion of the Lesson, had fallen back in his pew, with livid face and clenched hands.

The curate waited a moment till the commotion had abated; then he proceeded—"Urith Malvine, of this parish, spinster. If any of you know any just cause why these persons may not be joined together in holy matrimony——"

Squire Cleverdon staggered to his feet, and, clasping the back of the pew with both hands, in a harsh voice that rang through the church, cried, "I forbid the banns."

"This is the first time of asking," Luke proceeded, with a voice now firm: "If any objection be raised, I will hear it immediately after Divine Service."

Little attention was given through the rest of public worship to anything save the old father, his son, and to Urith. All eyes wandered from the Cleverdon pew, in which the Squire sat screened, and in which he no more rose, to Anthony in the chancel, and then to Urith, who was deadly pale.

Luke's sermon may have been eloquent and instructive; not a person in the congregation gave heed to it.

There was another present who turned

white at the announcement, and that was Julian Crymes; but she speedily recovered herself, and, rising, looked across the church at Urith with eyes that flamed with jealousy and hate. Her hand clenched her gloves, wrapped together in it. Yes, that wild moor-girl had won in the struggle, and she—the rich, the handsome Julian—was worsted. Her heart beat so furiously that she was afraid of leaning against the carved oak sides of the pew lest she should shake them. Her eye encountered that of her half-brother, twinkling with malice, and the sight gave back her self-possession; she would not let Fox see, and triumph over, her confusion.

The congregation waited with impatience for the conclusion of the service, and then, after defiling into the churchyard, did not disperse, they tarried to hear the result of the objection raised to the publication.

Urith hastened away with her uncle, but she had difficulty in persuading him to go with her. He had so many friends in the churchyard, there was such a topic for discussion ready; but her will prevailed over his, and after a forlorn look back at his

friends, and a shrug of the shoulders, he left with her.

But Anthony remained with head erect; he knew that no objection his father could make would avail anything. He nodded his head to acquaintances, and held out his hand to friends with his wonted confidence; but all showed a slight hesitation about receiving his advances, a hesitation that was so obvious that it angered him. He was at variance with his father, and the father held the purse strings. All knew that, and none liked to be too friendly with the young man fallen out of his fortune, and out of place.

Fox alone was really friendly. He pushed forward, and seized and shook Anthony's hand, and congratulated him. The young man was pleased.

"Bygones are bygones," said Fox, whose eye was covered with a patch, but no longer bandaged. "My sight is not destroyed, I shall receive it again, the doctor says. As for that affair on the moor, at the Drift —you know me better than to suppose I meant you harm."

"Certainly I do," answered Anthony, with warmth. "Just as you knew that when I struck you with the glove, I had not

the smallest desire to hurt you. It was—well, what you like to call it—a passage of arms or a frolic. It is over."

"It is over, and all forgotten," said Fox. "You will not be deterred by your father's refusal to give consent to this marriage?"

"Certainly I will not," answered Anthony. "He will come round in time. It is but a question of time."

There was no vestry. Old Cleverdon waited in the church till Luke had taken off his surplice, and then went up to him in the chancel.

"What is the meaning of this?" he asked, rudely. "How dare you—who have eaten of my bread, and whose back I clothed—take the part of Anthony against me?"

Luke replied gravely, "I have done my office; whoever asks me to read his banns, or to marry him, I am bound to execute my office."

"I will write to the rector, and have you sent out of the cure."

"You may do so, if you please."

Luke maintained his calm exterior. The old man was trembling with anger.

"If you have objections to the marriage, state them," said Luke.

"Objections! Of course I have. The marriage shall not take place. I forbid it."

"On what grounds?"

"Grounds!—I do not choose that it shall take place; let that suffice."

"That, however, will not suffice for me. I am bound to repeat the banns, and to marry the pair, if they desire it, unless you can show me reasons—legitimate reasons—to make me refuse. Anthony is of age."

"He *shall* not marry that hussy. I will disinherit him if he does. Is not that enough? I will not be defied and disputed with. I have grounds which I do not choose to proclaim to the parish."

"Grounds I know you have," answered Luke gravely: "but not one that will hold. Why not give your consent? Urith is not penniless. Willsworthy will prove a good addition to Hall. Your son loves her, and she loves him."

"I will not have it. He shall not marry her!" again broke from the angry man. "He does it to defy me."

"There you are in error. It is you who have forced him into a position of enstrangement, and apparent rebellion, because you will not suffer him to obey his own heart.

He seeks his happiness in a way different from what you had mapped out; but it is *his* happiness, and he is better able to judge what conduces thereto than are you."

"I do know better than he. Does it lead to happiness to live separated from me—for I will never see him if he marries that hussy? Will it be to his happiness to see Hall pass away into other hands? Never, so help me God! shall he bring her over my threshold—certainly never as mistress. Answer me that."

The blood mounted to Luke's cheeks, and burnt there in two angry spots.

"Master Cleverdon," he said, and his voice assumed the authority of a priest, "your own wrongdoing is turning against you and yours. You did Urith's father a wrong, and you hate him and his daughter because you know that you were guilty towards him. You took from him the woman he loved, and who loved him, and sought to build your domestic happiness on broken hearts. You failed: you know by bitter experience how great was your failure; and, instead of being humbled thereby, and reproaching yourself, you become rancorous against his innocent child."

"You—you, say this! You beggar, whom I raised from the dunghill, fed, and clothed?"

"I say it," answered Luke, with calmness, but with the flame still in his cheek, "only because I am grateful to you for what you did me, and I would bring you to the most blessed, peace-giving, and hopeful state that exists—a state to which we must all come, sooner or later—some soon, some late, if ever we are to pass into the world of Light—a knowledge of self. Do not think that I reproach you for any other reason. You know that I speak the truth, but you will not admit it—bow your head and beat your breast, and submit to the will of God."

The Squire folded his arms and glared from under his heavy eyebrows at the audacious young man who presumed to hold up to him the mirror.

"You will not refrain from reading these banns?"

"Not without just cause."

"And you will defy me—and marry them?"

"Yes."

The old man paused. He was trembling

with rage and disappointment. He considered for a while. His face became paler —a dusky grey—and the lines between his nostrils and the corners of his mouth hardened and deepened. Forgetting that he was still in the church, he put his hat on his head; then he turned to walk away.

"I have shown all—all here, that I am against this; I have proclaimed it to the parish. I will not be defied with impunity. Take care you, Luke; I will leave no stone unturned to displace you. And as for Anthony, as he has made his bed so shall he lie—in his pigstye. Never—I call God to my witness—never in Hall."

As he passed through the richly-sculptured and gilt and painted screen, an old woman stepped forward and intercepted him on his way to the church door.

He put out his hand impatiently, to wave her away, without regarding her, and would have thrust past. But she would not be thus put aside.

"Ah, ha! Master Cleverdon!" she exclaimed, in harsh tones. "Look at me. Do you not know me—me, your wife's mother. Me, whom you threatened with the

stick should I venture through your doors to see my daughter?"

Old Cleverdon looked at her with a scowl. "Of course I know you—you old beldame Penwarne."

"There is a righteous God in heaven!" cried the old woman, with vehemence—extending her arms to bar his passage. "Now will He recompense to you all the heartache and misery you brought on my child—ay, and through your own child too! That is well! That is well!"

"Stand aside!"

"I will not make a way for you to go," continued the old woman. "If you venture to depart till I have spoken, I will run after you and shriek it forth in the churchyard where all may hear. Will you stay now?"

He made no further attempt to force his way past her.

"You thought that with your money you could buy everything—even my child's heart; and when you found you could not, then you took her poor heart, and trampled on it; you spurned it; and you trod it again and again under your cursed foot till all the blood was crushed out of it." Her eyes

glowed, there was the madness of long-retained and fostered hate in her heart. "You made a wreck of her life, and now your own child spurns you, and tramples on all your fatherly love, laughs at your ambition, mocks all your schemes, and flings back your love in your face as something too tainted, too base, to be worth a groat. Ah, ha! I have prayed to see this day. I see it, and am glad. Now go."

She stepped on one side, and the Squire walked down the church. In the porch he found Bessie, or rather Bessie found him, for he did not observe her. She put her hand on his arm, and looked earnestly, supplicatingly into his eyes. He shook off her hand, and walked on.

Half the congregation—nearly all the men, and a good many of the women were in the churchyard in groups, talking. Fox was with Anthony, but as soon as the Squire appeared, he fell from him and drew back near one of the trees of the church avenue, and fixed his keen observant eye on the old man. But every other eye was on him as well. Cleverdon came slowly, and with that mixture of pomposity and dignity which was usual with him, but was this day exag-

gerated, down the avenue, he nodded and saluted with his hat the acquaintances whom he observed, but he said no word of greeting to any one. Presently he came opposite his son, then he stayed his foot, looked at him, and their eyes met. Not a muscle was relaxed in his face, his eye was cold and stony. Then he turned his head away, and walked on at the same leisurely pace.

The blood boiled up in Anthony's arteries. A film passed over his sight and obscured it, then he turned and went down another path, and abruptly left the graveyard.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE PORCH.

The marriage had taken place: the banns were no further opposed. Old Cleverdon, indeed, sought a lawyer's advice; but found he could do nothing to prevent it. Anthony was of age, and his own master. The only control over him he could exercise was through the strings of the purse. The threads of filial love and obedience must have been slender, they had snapped so lightly. But the Squire had never regarded them much; he had considered the others tough to resist any strain—strong to hold—in the wildest mood.

He was not only incensed because Anthony had defied him, but because the defiance had been open and successful. He had proclaimed his disapproval of the

match by forbidding the banns before the entire parish; consequently, his defeat was public.

Urith had been carried, as by a whirlwind, out of one position into another, without having been allowed time to consider how great the change must necessarily be. She had, in her girlhood, hardly thought of marriage. Following her own will, independent, she had pictured to herself that condition as invested with a sort of charm which must bring upon her some sort of vassalage—a state in which her will must be subordinate to that of another.

The surroundings were the same: she had spent all her days since infancy in that quaint old thatched manor-house; looked out on the world through those windows; seen what of the world came there flow in through the same doors; had sat at the same table, on the same chairs; heard the tick-tick of the same clock; listened to the same voices—of Uncle Sol and the old family maid. The externals were the same; but her whole inner life had assumed a new purpose and direction.

She could think, at first, of nothing save her happiness. That rough home was

suddenly invested with beauty and fragrance, as though, in a night, jessamine and rose had sprung up around it, covered its walls, and were breathing their fragrance through the windows.

The course of her life had not been altered, broken by a leap and fall, but had expanded, because fuller, and at the same time deeper.

Now and then there came a qualm over her conscience at the thought of her mother. She had defied her last wishes, and her marriage had followed on the burial with indecent haste, but in the dazzle of sunshine in which she walked the motes that danced before her served but to intensify the brilliance of the light.

Summer was advancing. The raw winds of early spring were over, and the east wind when it came down off the moor was no longer edged as a razor, but sheathed in velvet. The world was blooming along with her heart, not with a lone flower here and there, but with exuberance of life and beauty.

Her mother had kept but a single domestic servant, a woman who had been with her for many years, and this woman remained

on. A charwoman came for the day, not regularly, but as frequently as she could.

The circumstances of the Malvines had been so bad that they could not afford a large household. Mistress Malvine had helped as much as she was able, and Urith, now that she was left mistress, and had introduced another inmate into the house, was called on to consider whether she would help in the domestic work, or keep another servant. She wisely resolved to lend a hand herself, and defer the enlargement of the household till the farm paid better than it did at present. That it would be doubled in value under prudent management, neither she nor Anthony doubted.

She believed his assurances, and his assurances were well-grounded. To make it possible to double its value, however, one thing was wanted, which was not available —capital, to buy sheep and cattle.

Anthony attacked the task with great energy. He knew exactly what was wanted, and he had great physical strength, which he did not spare.

Some of the walls of moonstone,—uncemented, unbound together by mortar, piled one on another, and maintaining their place

by their own weight—had fallen, and presented gaps through which the moor-ponies and cattle invaded the fields, and their own beasts escaped.

Anthony set to work to rebuild these places. The stones were there, but prostrate, and, through long neglect, overgrown with moss, and embedded in the soil. Urith brought out her knitting and sat on a stone by him, as he worked, in the sun and sweet air. Never had Urith been so happy—never Anthony so joyous. Never before had Urith cared about the preparation of a meal, and never before had Anthony so enjoyed his food. They were like children—careless of the morrow, laughing, and in cloudless merriment. The old servant, who had grumbled and shaken her head over the precipitate marriage of Urith, was carried away by the joyousness of the young couple, unbent, smiled, and forgave the indiscretion.

They received visitors—not many, but some. Urith and her mother had had few acquaintances, and these came to wish the young couple happiness. Those of old Cleverdon kept aloof, or came hesitatingly: they were unwilling to break with the rich father for the sake of the son out of favour.

Luke made his formal call. He came seldom: he had not sufficiently conquered his own heart to be able to look on upon the happiness of his cousin and Urith without a pang. When, a month after the wedding, he met Anthony one day, the latter flew out somewhat hotly in complaint of the neglect with which he had been treated.

"I suppose you also, Cousin Luke, are hedging, and trying to make friends with my father by showing me the cold shoulder."

"You say this!" exclaimed Luke, in pained surprise.

"You have rarely been to see me since my marriage. I hardly know what is going on in the world outside our boundary-walls. But it does not matter—I have a world of work, and of content within."

Luke made no reply.

"There is Bessie, too—I thought better of her—she has not been over to us. I suppose she knows on which side her bread is buttered."

"There you wrong her," answered Luke, hotly. "You little have understood and valued Bessie's generous, unselfish, loving heart, if you can say such a word as that of her."

"Then why has she not been near me?"

"Because she has been forbidden by your father. You know, if you have any grace in you, Anthony, that this prohibition troubles her, and costs her more tears and heartaches than you."

"She should disobey in this matter. I see neither reason nor religion in blind obedience to irrational commands."

"She may serve your interests better by submission. You may be well assured that your welfare is at her heart; and that she seeks in every way to bend your father's stubborn will, and bring him to a reconciliation with you."

"By the Lord, Luke!" exclaimed Anthony, "I wish you would take Bessie yourself. She would make an admirable parson's wife."

Luke paused a moment before he replied, then he answered, in a constrained voice, coldly, "Anthony, in such matters I follow my own impulse, and not the directions of others. You speak thinking only of yourself, and your wish to be able once more to see your sister makes you suggest what might be distasteful to her, and unsuitable to me."

"There, there, it was a joke," said Anthony. "Excuse me if I be a little fretted by separation from Bessie. She would be of the greatest possible assistance to Urith, and Urith has no one——"

"There is still one course open to you, which may lead to reconciliation," said Luke.

"And that——?"

"Is to go to Hall and see your father. Try what effect that has on him. It cannot make matters worse, and it may make them better."

"Oh! repeat the story of the Prodigal Son! But I am not a prodigal. I feel no repentance. I cannot say, 'Father I have sinned against heaven and against thee—make me as one of thy hired servants.' I cannot say what I do not feel. It is he who has transgressed against me."

"And you expect him to come to you, beating his breast; and then you will kill the fatted calf and embrace and forgive him?"

Anthony laughed, with a heightened colour. "Not so, exactly; but—it will all come right in the end. He can't hold out, and in the end must take me back into

favour. To whom else could he leave Hall?"

One market day Anthony and Urith were in Tavistock. Every one was there whom he knew; market was attended by all the gentry, the farmers, and tradespeople of the country side; by all who had goods to sell or wanted to buy, and by such as wanted to, or were able to do, neither one nor the other, but who could exchange news and eat and drink at the ordinary, and perhaps thereat get drunk.

Urith rode to market on pillion behind Anthony, holding to the leather belt about his waist. The day was bright, and as they rode, he turned his head over his shoulder and spoke to her, and she answered him. They were as children full of mirth, only one little cloud on the horizon of each—on that of Anthony, the lack of warmth with which his old acquaintance greeted him, a matter that vexed him more than did the estrangement from his father; on that of Urith, the consciousness that she had disobeyed her mother's last wishes, but in the great splendour of their present happiness these little clouds were disregarded.

In Urith's bosom was a rose—the first

rose of summer—that Anthony had picked, and he had himself fastened in with a pin to her bodice, and she had kissed his head as he was engaged thereon.

The day was not that of ordinary market: it was the Whitsun fair as well; and, as Anthony approached Tavistock, numbers of holiday-makers were overtaken, or overtook him, on his way to the town. The church bells were ringing, for there was Divine Service on such festival days, and this was usually attended by all the women who came to fair, whilst their husbands saw to the putting away of their horses, saving only such as had wares for sale, and these occupied themselves during worship with their stalls, if they had them, if not, with spreading their goods on the ground in such advantageous manner as best to attract purhasers.

"You will come to me to the church porch, Tony!" said Urith, as she dismounted. "In the crowd we may miss each other, and I shall like to go on your arm."

So it was agreed, and Urith entered the church. This, a fine four-aisled building, was in ancient times, as it is now, the parish church; it stood in the shadow of the mighty Minster of the Abbey, dwarfed by it, a stately

pile, second only in size in the county to the Cathedral Church of Exeter. Ruins of it remained at the time of this tale, tall pillars and arches, and the main road from Plymouth had, out of wilful wickedness, been run, in the days of the Commonwealth, up what had been the nave, and the east end torn down, so that market could be held in the desecrated House of God, under the partial shelter of the vaulted aisles. All is now gone, quarried away to supply every man with stone who desired to rebuild his house; most of it removed for the construction of the stately mansion of the Earls of Bedford, who were possessed of the Abbey property.*

"What—you here! So we see you again?" exclaimed Fox, as Anthony dismounted in the inn-yard. Fox Crymes held forth his hand, and it was warmly grasped by Anthony, who at once looked at his eye. Crymes had discontinued the bandage, but all did not seem right with the orb. "I can see with it," said the latter, observing the look of Anthony, "but with a cloud; that, I fear, will ever hang there."

"You know that I would pluck out one of

* Now the Bedford Inn.

my own eyes and give it you," said Anthony, with sincerity and emotion. "I shall never forget that unhappy blow."

"Nor I," answered Crymes, dryly.

"Is your sister here?" asked Anthony.

"Yes—in the church. By the way, Tony, how is it that we never see you at the Hare and Hounds? Does not the apron string extend so far? Or are your legs too clogged with the honey in the pot into which you are dipping for you to be able to crawl so far?"

"Oh! you will see me there some day; but now I am too hard-worked. All Sol Gibbs's muddles to mend, you understand, and neglects to be made up for. I work like a slave."

"How about your father? Any nearer a reconciliation?" There was a leer in Fox's eye as he asked this.

Anthony shrugged his shoulders.

"I must be off," said he.

"Where to?"

"To the porch. I promised Urith to meet her there."

"Oh! she is pulling at the apron-string. Let me not detain you."

Anthony walked away. He was annoyed.

It was absurd, preposterous of Fox to speak to him as if he were in subjection to his wife. The words of Fox left an uneasy feeling in his breast, as if it had been touched by a nettle, a tingle, a sting, nothing to signify—but a perceptible discomfort.

He reached the church porch as Urith and Julian were leaving the church, and he arrived at a critical moment.

That morning before leaving Willsworthy, Urith had taken her gloves to draw them on, when she found them stuck together with some adhesive matter. On turning them over she found that the palms and fingers were covered with pitch. It then occurred to her that she had laid her hands on some rails that had been recently blackened with pitch to preserve them from decay, by her husband, and that it was not dry, as she had supposed. The gloves were spoiled—she could not wear them. She was not possessed of another pair, and could not ride to Tavistock with hands uncovered.

Her eyes fell on the pair that had belonged to Julian, and which had been cast at her in defiance. After hesitating a moment, she drew these on, and resolved to purchase herself fresh gloves in the fair.

On reaching church, she drew off her gloves, and laid them across the rail of the pew.

Julian Crymes was near, in the Kilworthy pew—that belonging of the Glanvilles, as did the pew in Peter Tavy Church also, attached to another house owned by the family in that parish.

Urith did not give her gloves a thought till she saw Julian's eyes fixed on them, and caught a dark glance from her.

Then she coloured, conscious of the mistake she had made, but recovered herself immediately. She had won in the match—a fair one, and had carried off the stakes. A sense of elation came upon her, she held up her head, and returned Julian's look with one of haughty triumph. She saw Julian's colour darken, and her lips tremble; a passage of arms took place in the church, the weapons being but glances of sharp eyes.

What was played and sung neither considered, each was engaged on her own thoughts. Elated Urith was—happiness fills the heart with pride. She—she whom no one hitherto had regarded, had wrested away the great prize against tremendous odds—Julian's beauty, family, position, wealth,

and the weight of his own father's advocacy. For her sake he had thrown away everything that others esteemed. She had cause to be proud—reason to feel her heart swell with the sense of victory: and who that has won a victory does not desire a public triumph?

No sooner was the service over, than Urith, with a little ostentation drew on the gloves, then took the rose Anthony had pinned to her stomacher, and looking fixedly at Julian, loosened it, pressed it to her lips, and replaced it. Her rival read in the act the very thoughts of her heart. That rose which had been given her was the pledge of Anthony's love.

Julian panted with anger. It was well for her that none was in the pew by her to notice her emotion. At the last Amen she flung open the door, and stepped out into the aisle, at the same moment as Urith, and both made their way to the porch, side by side, without a look at each other. They passed through the doorway together, and saw Anthony standing there.

Instantly—the whole thing was done so quickly as to escape Anthony's notice—Julian turned with flashing eye on Urith, plucked the rose from her bosom, pressed it

to her own lips, then threw it on the ground and crushed it under her foot.

There was no time—that was no place for retaliation. Urith's blood rushed to her heart; then she caught her husband's arm, and with him walked away.

All that day a sense of alarm and unrest troubled her. Julian had renewed her defiance; had threatened both her and Anthony. Would this threat be as vain as her former defiance? Urith swallowed her fears, scorned to entertain them—but the sting remained.

In the evening, when about to start on her return, when his horse was ready—"You must wait for me a moment, Tony," she said, and hurried back to the porch.

The rose, trampled out of shape, trodden on by many feet, lay there, soiled and petalless.

If Julian were to snatch him away, were to cast him down under foot and crush him—what would she do? Would she wear him again? Would she stoop to him?

She stood in the grey, cool porch, looking at the battered flower. Then she bent, picked up the rose, and hid it in her bosom.

CHAPTER XXIV.

KILWORTHY.

Anthony helped Urith to the saddle, saying,

"I am not coming home just now. You must ride back alone."

"But why not?" Urith asked, in surprise, and a little disappointment.

"Must I account to you for all my acts?" said Anthony, somewhat testily.

"Not at all," answered Urith; "but surely there is no objection to my asking so innocent a question as that. If, however, it gives you displeasure, I will abide without an answer."

"Oh!" said Anthony, the cloud passing from his face, "I have no reason not to answer. I am going with Fox. He has asked me to return with him to Kilworthy;

and as I have seen no one for a couple—nay, for three months, and have well-nigh lost the use of my tongue, I have accepted."

"I do not like Fox. I do not like you to be with him."

"Am I to consult you as to whom I make my friends? He is the only one who has come forward with frankness, and has braved my father's displeasure by showing me a countenance of old friendliness."

"I do not like Fox—I mistrust him."

"I do not," said Anthony, bluntly. "I am not going to take my opinions from you, Urith."

"I do not suppose you will," retorted she, with a little heat; "but do not forget what he did to you at the Drift. That was a false and cowardly act."

"Oh!" laughed Anthony, somewhat contemptuously; "you maidens do not understand the sort of jokes we men play on each other. He meant no harm, and things went worse than he intended. None could have been more vexed at the turn they took than himself. He told me so."

"What! That a horse should go mad when burning touchwood is set in his ear?"

"He did not purpose to put it into his ear.

The horse tossed his head, and Fox's hand slipped."

"And his hand slipped when your fingers were cut?"

"No, not his hand, but his knife; it was in his sleeve. You would not have had it slip upwards?"

Urith was silent; she was angered, vexed—angered and vexed at Anthony's easy good-nature. Any excuse satisfied him. So with regard to his father's displeasure; it did not concern him greatly, it cost him not an hour's wakefulness. All would come right in the end, he said, and satisfied himself with sanguine hope. His was a buoyant nature, the opposite to her own, which was gloomy and mistrustful. She raised no further objection to Anthony leaving her to return home alone. He was in a touchy mood, and, for the first time since their marriage, answered her testily.

But she made allowance for him. He had been cut off from his friends, he had been forced out of his wonted course of life. He had been pinched for money, obliged to work hard. Was it not reasonable that on a fair-day and holiday he should wish to be with his old companions and make merry,

and have a glass of ale or a bottle of sack? Uncle Sol could not or would not accompany her home; he also had friends to detain him, and purposed to pass the evening in an alehouse, singing and making merry.

Urith's knowledge of men, their ways, and their fancies, was limited to the study of her uncle; and though she could not believe that her Anthony was a sot and witless, yet she supposed that he partook of the same taste for society and for the bottle, which she regarded as much a characteristic of men as a rough chin and a masculine voice.

Anthony, with unconcern, was on his way to Kilworthy. This ancient mansion stood high, with its back to the north wind; before it the hills fell away in noble park land studded with oak and beech over a century old—trees that had been planted by Judge Glanville in the reign of Elizabeth—and beyond the valley of the Tavy rose the tumbled, desolate ridges of Dartmoor, of a scabious blue, or wan as ashes.

The side of the hill was hewn away near the house into a series of terraces, one planted with yews, the others rich with flowers. The house itself had that stately beauty that belongs to Elizabethan mansions.

When Anthony arrived along with Fox, he was not a little surprised to see a large company assembled. Many of the young people and their parents of the best families around were there, sauntering in the gardens, or playing bowls on the green.

He was surprised, for Fox had not prepared him to meet company, but he was pleased, for he had been cut off from society for some months, had hardly seen old friends, and now he was delighted to be among them, and—his father being absent—on the old familiar terms. The depression of his spirits gave way at once, and he was filled with cheerfulness and fun; he played bowls, and when the dew fell, and it was deemed advisable for all to retire from the garden, he was most ready of all for a dance.

Julian was also in high spirits; she was looking remarkably pretty in a light summer dress. See met Anthony with frankness, and he engaged her for the first dance.

The beauty of the place, the pleasant society, the profusion of good food and wines, united to give Anthony satisfaction. He appreciated all this so much the more, as he had been deprived of these things for some time. It was true that he had enjoyed

the company of Urith, but then Urith's circle of associates was almost nothing; she did not know those people that he knew, was not interested about matters that woke in him curiosity. She could talk only of Willsworthy; and Willsworthy as a subject of conversation was easily exhausted. There was a freedom in the society of those he now met, a want of constraint that delighted him. When one topic ran dry another was started. With Urith conversation flagged, because there was no variety in the subjects of conversation.

Then again the beauty and richness of the place gratified his eye after the bleakness of Willsworthy. There, high on the moor side, only sycamores would grow—here were trees of royal appearance, huge trunked, with broad expanding branches, the aristocracy of trees as seen only in English parks, where they are given from infancy scope to expand. At home, moreover, the general narrowness of means and lack of management had not made of the table a place of enjoyment. A meal was necessary, something to be scrambled through and got over. No effort was made by Mrs. Malvine in earlier days to make it a gratification for

the palate, and it did not occur to Urith when she was married and mistress of the household that things might in this respect be improved. Anthony was no epicure, but young men as well as old like to have palatable dishes set before them, and to have not only their wives well-dressed and tricked out, but also their dishes. Here also Urith failed. She disregarded personal adornment. Handsome though she was, she would have looked far handsomer had she cared to set off her charms with tasteful dress. She despised all solicitude about dress, and it was a little disappointment to Anthony that she took so little pains to do justice to herself in this respect. Now that he was in the midst of pretty girls, charmingly set off by their light gowns and bright ribbons, he felt as if he had stepped out of association with moths into that of butterflies—out of a vegetable into a flower-garden.

Again, since his marriage—indeed, ever since he had left Hall, he had felt the irksomeness of being without money, he had discovered the value of coin, and had learned that it could not be thrown away. He had nothing of his own, what coins he

had in his pocket came to him from his wife.

Now he was in a house where money seemed to be disregarded. He need not drink sour cider, but take his choice of wines. He was not served at table by one old maid-of-all-work, but by liveried footmen, in the blue and yellow Glanville colours. The table was furnished with abundance of plate, engraved with the Glanville stags or the Crymes martlet. At Willsworthy he had used bone-handled knives and forks, and had eaten off pewter.

He danced with Julian once more. She was bright, sparkling with merriment, full of lively sally, and she looked marvellously pretty. Anthony wondered at himself for not having observed it before, or at not having sufficiently appreciated it.

His sister arrived, somewhat late, and Anthony at once went to her, with both hands extended

"Is Urith here?" she asked.

"No."

"Why not?"

"She was not invited."

"Then why are you here?"

"For this good reason, that I was invited."

"But, Tony," said Bessie, "you ought not to have accepted unless she was asked as well."

"Nonsense! Bet," exclaimed Anthony, fretfully. "I am not tied to her apron-strings. We have not met for months, and your first address to me is—a rebuke."

He walked away, annoyed, and rejoined Julian.

What! was he to be debarred visiting his friends—spending a pleasant social evening with them—because he was asked without his wife!

"I say, Tony," said Fox, into his ear, "what do you think of Kilworthy now? You have thrown it away for the sake of a pair of sulky eyes—aye, and Hall, too! Well, I have always heard say that love was madness; but I never believed it till I heard what you had done."

Anthony's pleasure was spoiled. The contrast between Kilworthy and Willsworthy had been unconsciously drawn in his mind before; now it was fixed and brought into prominence, and he saw and realized in a moment the tremendous sacrifice he had made. From this minute he looked on all around him with other eyes. He saw what

might have been his position, his wealth—how he would have been esteemed and envied had he followed the course mapped out for him by his father—had he taken Julian instead of Urith.

He looked again at Julian — his eyes insensibly followed her—and again he marvelled that hitherto there had been a veil over them, so that he had not appreciated her beauty. He could not withdraw his eyes: they pursued her wherever she went.

All at once she turned, with the consciousness that he was looking at her. Their eyes met, and he coloured to the temples. He blushed at his thoughts, for he was asking himself whether life, with such comfortable surroundings, would not have been more than bearable—even delightful—at her side.

In a moment he had recovered himself; but not his lightheartedness—that was gone. He asked for his horse, and then remembered that he had none. Urith had ridden home on his horse, therefore he must walk.

CHAPTER XXV.

GATHERING CLOUDS.

Next day Anthony's brow was clouded, and his manner had lost its usual cheerfulness. He was angry with himself for having been to Kilworthy. Bessie was right, he acknowledged it now—a slight had been put on his wife by his being invited without her. He ought to have seen this before. He ought to have refused the invitation. Then he remembered that he had been told nothing about a party at the house, so his anger was turned upon Fox, who had entrapped him into a false position.

But this was not all. He was ashamed of himself for having for a moment reconsidered his conduct in taking Urith instead of Julian. In vain did he reason with himself that he had done something heroic in

resigning such enormous advantages for the sake of a girl; whether he liked it or not, the odious thought lurked in a corner of his heart and would not be expelled—Was Urith worth the sacrifice?

There was much to humiliate him in his present state. He who had been wont to spend his money freely had now to reckon his coppers, and calculate whether he could afford the small outlay that slight pleasures entailed. And then—these coppers were not his, but his wife's. He was living on her bounty, indebted to her for every glass of ale he drank. Of his own, he had nothing. His confidence that his father's obstinacy would give way, and that he would be taken into favour again, was shaken. He began to fear that so long as his father lived he would remain in disfavour. That, on his father's disease, he would inherit Hall, he did not doubt for a moment. There was no one else to whom the old man could bequeath the estate. Bessie was a girl, and Luke a parson—disqualifications absolute.

Most heartily did he wish that the misunderstanding with his father were at an end. It was a degradation for him—for him, the heir of the Cleverdons—to be sponging

on his wife. The situation was intolerable. But how was it to be altered? He could not force his father to reconciliation. His pride forbade his going to him and acting the prodigal son. His heart grew hot and bitter against the old man for his unreasonable and persistent hostility, which had reduced him to a position so pitiable and humiliating.

Then there arose before his mind's eye the beautiful grounds and noble mansion of Kilworthy, the pleasant company there—and Julian. He shook his head impatiently, set his teeth, and stamped on the floor, but he could not rid himself of the thoughts.

"I do not see, 'fore Heaven, why we should not have a clean table-cover," he said, at dinner; "nor why every dish should be huddled on to the board at once. I am not a pig, and accustomed to feed as in a stye."

Urith looked at him with surprise, and saw that displeasure was lowering on his brow.

She answered him gently, but he spoke again in the same peevish, fault-finding tones. He complained that the pewter dishes were hacked with knives, and the

mugs bent out of shape and unpolished. If they must eat as do servants in a kitchen, let them at least have the utensils in trim order.

Urith sought in vain to dispel the ill-humour that troubled him; this was her first experience of domestic disagreement. The tears came into her eyes from disappointment, and then his ill-humour proved contagious. She caught the infection and ceased to speak. This annoyed him, and he asked her why she said nothing.

"When there are clouds over Lynx Tor there is vapour over Hare Tor as well," she answered. "If you are in gloom I am not like to be in sunshine. What ails you?"

"It is too maddening that my father should remain stubborn," he said. "You cannot expect me to be always gay, with the consciousness that I am an outcast from Hall."

She might have answered sharply, and the lightning would then have flashed from cloud to cloud, had not, at that moment, Luke entered the house.

"Come at last!" was Anthony's ungracious salutation.

"I have not been here often, certainly," said Luke, "for I did not suppose you

wanted me; the parson is desired by those in sorrow and tears, not by those in perfect happiness."

"Oh!" said Anthony, "it is not as the parson we want you, but as a cousin and comrade."

Urith asked Luke if he would have a share of the meal just concluded. He shook his head; he had eaten before leaving the rectory. He had taken his meal early, so as to be sure of catching Anthony at home before he went abroad.

As Luke spoke he turned his eyes from his cousin to Urith, and saw by the expression of their faces that some trouble was at their hearts; but he had the tact not to advert to it, and to wait till they of their own accord revealed the cause.

"Have you been to Hall lately? Have you seen my father?" asked Anthony, after a pause, with his eyes on the table.

"I have not been there; your father will not see me. He cannot forgive the hand I had in making you happy."

"Then you have no good news to bring me?"

"None thence. I have talked to Bessie——"

"So have I. I saw her yesterday at Kilworthy, and she scolded me instead of comforting me."

"Comforting you! Why, Anthony, I do not suppose for an instant that she thought you needed comfort."

"Should I not, when my father shuts me out of his house—out of what should be mine—the house that will be mine some day! It is inhuman!"

"I can quite believe that your father's hardness causes you pain, but no advantage is gained by brooding over it. You cannot alter his mood, and must patiently endure till it changes. Instead of altering his for the better, you may deteriorate your own by fretful repining."

Anthony tossed his head.

"You, too, in the fault-finding mood! All the world is in league against me."

"Take my advice," said Luke; "put Hall out of your thoughts and calculations. You may have to wait much longer than you imagined at one time till your father relents; you know that he is tough in his purpose, and firm in his resolution. He will not yield without a struggle with his pride. So —act as if Hall were no more yours than Kilworthy."

Anthony winced, and looked up hastily, his colour darkened, and he began hastily and vehemently to rap at the table.

"Kilworthy!" Why had Luke mentioned that place by name? Was he also mocking him, as Fox had yester-even, for throwing away his chance of so splendid a possession?

Luke did not notice that this reference had touched a vibrating string in his cousin's conscience. He went on, "Do not continue to reckon on what may not be yours. It is possible—though I do not say it is likely—that your father may disinherit you. Face the worst, be prepared for the worst, and then, if things turn out better than you had anticipated, well!—You unman yourself by living for, reckoning on, dead men's boots; make yourself shoes out of your own hide, and be content that you have the wherewithal to cover your feet."

"You think it possible that my father may never come round—even on his death-bed?"

"God grant he may," answered Luke, gravely. "But he entertains an old and bitter grudge against your wife's father, and this grudge has passed over to and invests her. God grant His grace that he may

come to a better mind, for if he goes out of this life with this grudge on his heart, he cannot look to find mercy when he stands before the throne of his Judge."

Anthony continued drumming on the table with his fingers.

"My recommendation is," continued Luke, "that you rest your thoughts on what you have, not on what you have not. And you have much to be thankful for. You have a wife whom you love dearly, and who loves you no less devotedly. You are your own master, living on your own estate, and in your own manor house. So—live for that, care for that, cultivate your own soil, and your own family happiness, and let the rest go packing."

"My own house! my own land!" exclaimed Anthony. "These are fine words, but they are false. Willsworthy is not mine, it belongs to Urith."

"Anthony!" cried his wife, "what is mine you know is yours—wholly, freely."

"Well," said Luke, with heat, "and if Hall had been yours when you took Urith, it would have been no longer mine or thine, but ours. So it is with Willsworthy. Love is proud to receive and to give, and it never

reckons what it gives as enough, and accepts what it receives as wholly its own."

Anthony shrugged his shoulders, then set his elbows on the table, and put his head in his hands.

"I reckon it is natural that I should grieve over the alienation from my father."

"You are not grieving over it because it is an alienation from your *father*, but from Hall, with the comforts and luxuries to which you were accustomed there."

"Do you not see," exclaimed Anthony, impatiently, "that it is I who should support my wife, and not my wife who should find me in bread and butter? Our proper positions are reversed."

"Not at all. Willsworthy has gone to rack and ruin, and if it be brought back to prosperity, it will be through your energy and hard work."

"Hard work!" echoed Anthony. "I have had more of that since I have been here than ever I had before."

"Well, and why not? You are not afraid of work, are you?"

"Afraid! No. But I was not born to be a day labourer."

"You were born, Anthony, the son of a yeoman family which has worked hard to

bring itself up into such a condition that it now passes for a family of gentry. Do not forget that, and do not blush for yourself when you use the muck-fork or the spade, or you are unworthy of your stout-hearted ancestors."

Anthony laughed. The cloud was dispelled. This allusion to the family and its origin touched and pleased him. He had often joked over his father's pretensions. He put forth his hand to his cousin, who clasped it warmly.

"All well, old friend, you are right. If I have to build up the new branch of the Cleverdons, it is well. I am content. Fill the tankard to the prosperity of the Cleverdons of Willsworthy—and to the dogs with Hall!"

Anthony put his arm round Urith's waist. The clouds had cleared, and, as they rolled off his brow, that of Urith brightened also. Luke rose to depart. He would not suffer his cousin to attend him from the door. He went forth alone; and, when he had passed the gate, he halted, raised his hand, and said, "Peace be to this house!" Yet he said it with a doubt in his heart. He had seen a ruffle on the placid water, and that ruffle might forebode a storm.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON THE TERRACE.

Months had passed. On the 6th of February, 1685, died Charles II., and James, the Duke of York, succeeded to the throne. At once, through England, the story was spread that Charles had been poisoned by the Jesuits to secure the succession for James, and forestall the purpose of the King to declare the legitimacy of his son, the Duke of Monmouth. So great was the suspicion entertained against James, that this slander was very widely believed, and alarm and resentment grew in the hearts of the people. On the very first Sunday after his father's death James went in solemn State to Mass, and at his Coronation refused to receive the Sacrament at the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

When the crown was set on his head it slipped, and nigh fell on the floor; and this little incident was whispered, then bruited, through England, and was regarded as a token from Heaven that he was not the rightful Sovereign, but an usurper.

Then came the punishment of that scoundrel, Titus Oates, richly deserved; but Oates was a popular favourite, and his chastisement raised him to the pedestal of a Protestant martyr.

It was well known that James aimed at the repeal of the Habeas Corpus Act, and at the toleration—even promotion—of Popery, and the country was in fevered agitation and brooding anger at what was menaced.

Such was the condition of affairs in the spring of 1685.

There had been catching weather, a few days of bright sunshine, and then thundershowers. Then the sky had cleared, the wind was well up to the north, and, though the sun was hot, the air was fresh. It was scented, everywhere except on the moor, with the fragrance of hay.

Julian Crymes was out of doors enjoying the balmy air and the sloping, golden rays of the evening sun. She had some em-

broidery in her hands; but she worked little at it. Her eyes looked away dreamily at the distant moor, and specially at a little grey patch of sycamores, that seemed—so remote were they—against the silvery moor to be a cloud-shadow. Behind that grey tuft rose Ger Tor, strewn with granite boulders; and on one side opened the blue cleft of the Tavy, where it had sawn for itself a way from the moorland into the low country. The dark eyes of the girl were full to spilling—so full that, had she tried to continue her needlework, she would have been unable to see how to make her stitches.

Her breath came short and quick, for she was suffering real pain—that gnawing ache which in its initiation is mental, but which becomes sensibly physical.

Julian had loved Anthony. She loved him still. When he had come that evening of the fair to Kilworthy, her heart had bounded: her head had turned giddy with pleasure at seeing him again—above all, at seeing him without his wife. Towards Urith she felt implacable, corroding hatred. That girl—with no merit that she could see, only a gloomy beauty—a beauty as savage as the moors on the brink of which she

lived, and on which Anthony had found her —that girl had shaken to pieces at a touch her cloud-castle of happiness, and dissolved it into a lashing rain of disappointment.

Anthony was taken from her, taken from her for ever, and her own hopes laid in the dust. Julian had battled with her turbulent heart; her conscience had warned her to forget Anthony, and at times she really felt as if she had conquered her passion. No sooner, however, did she see Anthony again, than it woke up in full strength; and whenever she saw Urith, her jealous rage shook itself and sharpened its claws.

Her father was away in London, and on the seat beside her lay a letter she had that day received from him. He had written full of uneasiness at the political and religious situation. Recently the Earl of Bath had been down in the West of England with new charters to towns in Devon and Cornwall, constituting new electoral bodies, or altering the former bodies, and a hurried election had ensued, in which great pressure had been used to obtain the return of the Court party, of Catholics, and Tories, by intimidation on the one side and by bribery on the other. Mr. Crymes, however,

supported by the authority of the Earl of Bedford, had been returned for Tavistock in the Protestant interest, and he was now in London, sitting in the first Parliament summoned by James II.

Titus Oates, whom the Protestants, or at all events the more ignorant and prejudiced among them, believed in as a faithful witness, had been whipped from Aldgate to Newgate one day, and two days after, again from Newgate to Tyburn, for having revealed the Popish Plot, which was declared to be a fabrication of his own imagination. He and Dangerfield, another of the witnesses, had been pilloried. The King meditated the repeal of the Habeas Corpus and the forcible introduction of the Roman Catholic religion. It was rumoured that there was a rising in Scotland, headed by the Duke of Argyle; there was great uneasiness in London, and a disturbance of spirits throughout the country. Though the Members of Parliament had been elected in a questionable manner, so as to bring together an undue preponderance of creatures of the Court, yet it had not proved itself as submissive as the King expected. The letter concluded with the words:—"How this will all end, God

knows. For myself, I doubt whether there will not be great troubles again even as there were in the times of His Sacred Majesty King Charles I. For mine own part, I would resist even unto blood, rather than see our religion set at naught, and our liberties trampled under foot by Jesuits; and my daily prayer is that the Lord will avert such things from us, and yet with such extravagance and determination do things appear to be pressed forward towards this end, that I have not hope myself of a peaceable issue."

Had Mr. Crymes been then beside his daughter, he might have supposed that the sad political outlook had disturbed her mind, and had brought the tears to her eyes and the flush to her cheeks; but she had read his letter with indifference. His gloomy forecasts had hardly affected her at all, for her heart was filled with its own peculiar bitterness.

What prospect of happiness opened before her? She cared for no one; she could care for no one after having given up her heart to Anthony. From childhood she had looked up to him as her allotted husband—she had grown up with a daily-increasing

devotion to him. His good looks, his frankness had helped to make of him an idol before whom she bowed down and worshipped. He was swept out of the horizon of her ambition, and it had left that prospect utterly blank and colourless. She had valued her fortune, her home, only as means of enriching Anthony, and giving him a worthy position in the county. Her fortune was now wholly without value to her. She would have been contented to be a beggar with him, if she could have possessed him wholly as her own.

Suddenly she started, and lost her colour; she saw Anthony coming up the drive to the house. He saw her on the terrace, in her white gown under the yew-trees, and he waved his hat to her. She beckoned to him; she could not help herself. She knew that it would have been right for her to fly up the steps and hide in the walled garden which occupied the slope of the hill above the terraces, but she was powerless to move —to withhold her hand from signing to him to draw near.

He obeyed at once, and came up the steps to the first terrace with a shouted salutation.

How handsome he was! What dark, sparkling eyes! What wavy long hair, that fell over his brow and cheeks as he took off his broad-brimmed hat, so that he was forced to put his hands to his face and brush the thick curly locks back.

Julian did not rise; she sat on her bench as though frozen, and her blood stood still in her arteries. She looked at him with eyes large and trembling between the lashes. Then he came striding towards her, with his hearty salutation, and at once all the blood that had been arrested in her veins, as Jordan when the Ark stood in its course, rushed back in pent-up, burning floods, and so blinded and stunned her that for a moment or two she could neither see nor speak.

After a few moments, during which he stood respectfully before her, hat in hand, she looked up into his eyes, and asked why he had come.

He was warm with walking, and the drops stood on his brow, and he had a heightened glow in his face. He was handsomer than ever, she exclaimed inwardly, and then thought, "Oh! if he had been mine! been mine! as he ought to have been—as he

would have been but for——" Then she checked herself, assumed a coolness she did not feel, and asked, "Has anything else brought you here than the desire to give us honest pleasure at seeing again an old friend?"

"Indeed, Julian," answered Anthony, "I have come on more self-seeking purposes. We are behind with our hay at Willsworthy. The place lies so high, and is so bleak, that we are a fortnight in arrear; moreover, the weather has played us tricks, so that none has as yet been saved. I want additional help; there are none save our two men and myself. Solomon Gibbs counts naught, and I cannot ask help from Hall, as you well know. I do not desire to ask a favour elsewhere, and so I have come here to see Fox, and ask his help."

"Fox is away—I believe he is at Hall. But I can answer your question, and grant your petition, which I do with a ready heart. How many men do you want? I will send all you desire—I will come myself and help toss the hay—No," she checked herself, as the thought of Urith rose within, "no, I will not go near Willsworthy myself, but I will send the workmen."

"I thank you," answered Anthony. "We do not grow rich shears of hay as you do here: but what does grow is said to be sweet. I hope it may be so, for it is not overmuch."

There was a tone of disparagement in reference to Willsworthy that struck Julian.

"I have heard Fox comment on the place," she said, "and he thinks well of it."

"A thing may appear well at a distance, that won't bear looking into close at hand," said Anthony.

She looked at him, and his eyes fell. He had not meant more than he had said, but when she thus glanced up with a query in her eyes, he thought that perhaps his words might apply to other things than grass fields and tumbledown farm buildings.

Julian took up the letter from the seat by her, and passed her hand lightly over the seat as a sign to him to take it.

He did so, without more ado. He was heated and tired with his walk.

Then Julian resumed her embroidery, and bowed her head over it. She waited for him to start some topic of conversation. But he was silent. He who had been

formerly full of talk and mirth, had become reserved and grave.

After a long and painful silence, Julian asked in a low voice:—"What is Urith about?"

"I beg your pardon?" asked Anthony, roused out of a reverie. "Urith—what about Urith?"

"I asked what she was about."

"I cannot tell. Nothing in particular, I suppose."

The same tone as that in which he had spoken about Willsworthy.

"Your marriage does not seem to have improved your spirits. I miss your olden gaiety."

"I have enough to take that out of me. There is my father's continued ill-humour. What think you of that, Julian? Is there any immediate prospect of his coming to a better mind?"

"My brother could answer this question better than I, for I have no occasion or opportunity for speaking with your father, whereas Fox is over at Hall twice or thrice in the week."

"What makes him go there?"

"There you ask me what once more I

cannot answer. But let us say he goes in your interest. He is your friend."

"About the only friend I have left," said Anthony, with bitterness.

"Fox is not the man I would choose if I had the selection," said Julian. "I should know him better than most, as he is my brother—that is to say, my half-brother. I thank God—only my half-brother. Take heed to yourself, Anthony, that he does not play you a scurvy trick."

"What can he do?"

"You are generous and forgiving. Fox is neither. He has not forgiven you that blow with the glove that injured his eye."

"You wrong him, Julian."

"All I can say to you is—do not trust him. I never—never trust him. If he says one thing he means the contrary. Did he tell you that he went to Hall with the end of persuading your father to forgive you?"

"He did not even mention to me that he saw my father often."

"Well," said Julian, drawing a long breath, "whilst we are together, which is not often now, not as it was, let us talk of matters more pleasant than the habits and ways of action of Fox."

"What shall we talk about?"

"There!" said Julian, putting her father's letter into his hand, "Read that. If you cannot find a topic, I must help you to one."

Anthony read the letter with an elbow on each knee and his legs wide apart, so that his head was bent low. As he read, Julian's eyes were on him. Involuntarily a sigh escaped her bosom. If he thought of it at all he attributed it to sympathy with her father's anxiety; had he looked up and seen her face he would have been undeceived. It was well for him that he did not.

The letter interested him greatly. Like the bulk of the young men of the West, he was keenly alive to the political situation, and was a hot partisan. The gathering together of the men in taverns led to eager discussion of politics; the orderly Government of the Protector, and the extravagance and exactions of the restored Royalty, had aroused comparison. Under Old Noll the name of England had been respected abroad, and the English people could not forget and forgive the humiliation of the Dutch Fleet in the Medway and the burning of Chatham. Those who had no love for Puritanism were,

nevertheless, ardent supporters of Liberty, and firmly resolved that their country should not be brought under Roman Catholic despotism. The ill-treatment of the Waldenses had roused great feeling in England, collections for them had been made in every parish church, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was not forgotten, the exiled Protestants filled all England with the tale of the cruelties and oppression to which they had been subjected, and had helped to deepen to a dogged determination in men's hearts the resolve never to suffer the Roman religion to obtain the mastery again in the land.

Anthony's brow darkened and his lips tightened as he read. When he had finished the letter he started to his feet, planted his hat on his head, and exclaimed,

"My God! I wish it would come to blows, and that I could carry a pike."

"Pshaw!" said Julian; "what excitable creatures you men are concerning matters that move us not a whit. I have forgotten what my father wrote about. Against whom would you trail a pike? With whom come to blows?"

Anthony did not answer, for it was not

easy to reply to these questions. He would fight for liberty and religion. But against whom? He dare not breathe even to himself the thought that it would be against his King.

"And, pray, why come to blows?"

"If you had read your father's letter with attention, you would know. For my part, I should hail war, if there were a chance of it, that I might have some occupation for my hands."

"You have the hay," said Julian, ironically.

"I want space to move, air to breathe. I am cramped. I—I do not know what I want," he said, and dashed his hat on the ground again, and threw himself into the seat by Julian.

"How would Urith relish your taking the pike for any cause?"

Anthony did not answer. He was looking sullenly, musingly before him. He had found out what troubled him—what took the brightness out of his life. The circle in which he moved, in which his energies were expended, was too cramped. To make hay! Was that a fitting work to occupy his mind and powers of body? His world—was that

to be the little two-hundred-acre estate of Willsworthy?

"You have not been married above two months, and you are already sighing with impatience to be away in a battlefield—anywhere but at home, poor Anthony!" Her face was turned from him that he might not see how her cheeks flamed.

He said nothing. He had not even bid her a good-bye; but he rose, resumed his hat, and walked away, with his head down, absorbed in his thoughts.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MATRIMONIAL PLANS.

Squire Cleverdon did not often visit his sister. She was vastly proud when he did. What she would have liked would have been for him to drive up to her door in a coach and four, the driver on the box cracking his whip; but Squire Cleverdon did not keep a coach. Why should he? He had no womankind to consider in his household. Of the fair and inferior sex there was but Bessie, and Bessie never counted in old Anthony Cleverdon's calculations. Had his wife lived, he probably would have had his coach, like other gentlemen, not to please and accommodate her, but out of ostentation. But as his wife had departed to another world, and Bessie was too inconsiderable a person to be reckoned, he was glad to be

able to spare his purse the cost of a coach, which he could hardly have purchased under a hundred pounds. As Magdalen Cleverdon could not see her brother ride up in a coach, she was forced to be satisfied to see him come as he would, on horseback, followed by two serving-men in his livery, and to be content that her neighbours should observe that the Cleverdons maintained so much state as to have men in livery to attend on the head of the house.

She was much surprised one day to see him come on foot without attendants. He was not a man to show his thoughts in his face, which was hard and wooden, but his eyes expressed his feelings when the rest of his face was under control—that is, when he did not screw down the lids and conceal them.

Accordingly Magdalen could not gather from her brother's countenance the purport of his visit, though she scrutinized it curiously.

He seated himself in one of her chairs, near the table, and laid his stick across his knees; Magdalen waited with the deference she usually paid him till he began the conversation; but he also, with unwonted

hesitation, deferred his communication to allow her to open the ball.

The silence became irksome to her, and she was the first to interrupt it, and then with the remark that she was surprised to see him arrive alone, and on foot.

"One does not require to have all the town know I am here, and know how many minutes I remain," said he, rudely, in reply.

Then again silence fell on both.

After another painful pause, Magdalen began: "Really, brother, I should like to know for what reason you have come to do me the honour, and afford me the *pleasure* of your company. The white witch has a crystal into which he looks, and in which he reads what he desires to know; but you veil your eyes, and I cannot discover, or attempt to discover, thence what your purport might be in coming hither."

Old Cleverdon fidgeted in his chair, dropped his stick, picked it up again, and blurted forth: "I suppose you get that disobedient son of mine tumbling in here every few days."

"Indeed, I do not, brother. Do you suppose that I countenance such rebellious conduct?"

"I did not know. I considered, as he might not show his face in Hall, that he came here for news about the place and me."

"I do not deny that I have seen him; but only rarely. He never did affect my company greatly, and I cannot say that he visits me more frequently since his marriage than he did before."

"I am glad to hear it. How is he getting on in his pigstye?"

"I have not been there to see. He and she are content with it for a while, and make no doubt that in the end you will forgive them, and be the best of fathers."

"Do they?" exclaimed the Squire, with a harsh laugh and a flame on his cheek. "Do they think that I have a head of dough, to be moulded into what shape they list?" He struck the table with his stick, so as to startle his sister and make her jump in her chair.

"Good heavens, brother! How excitable you are," said Magdalen; "and I dare be bound you do not know that Mistress Penwarne is taken into the Rectory at Peter Tavy as housekeeper to your most dutiful and respectful nephew Luke—an ancient harridan

who, having set her daughter against you, now does her utmost to make wildfire between your son and you."

"What wildfire burns atwixt us is of his own kindling," said Squire Cleverdon. "And does she reckon on setting herself in my armchair, and ruling in my house, indeed! My son I might forgive had he married any other, but not for having taken Urith."

"One beggarly marriage is enough in the family," said Magdalen. The expression had slipped her tongue without consideration. She saw at once, by the twitching of her brother's muscles, that she had stung and enraged him. She hastened to amend her error by saying, "Yes, you were drawn in by their designing ways. You had not then the knowledge of the world you now have. Having been entangled by unscrupulous and poor wretches yourself, you would not have your son fall a prey to the like—but he would sow his wild oats, and must now reap his crop."

"Yes," said old Anthony, "he must reap his crop, which will not prove one of oats, but of thistles and nettles. 'Tis a cruel shame that Kilworthy should go from the family."

"It has never been in it."

"That is true—never in actual possession, but so long in prospect as to almost constitute a claim."

"But gone it is. Gone past the possibility of your getting it."

"I am not so confident of that as you seem to be," said old Cleverdon, snappishly. "In faith, sister Magdalen, you appear wondrous blind. Is there no way of it coming, nevertheless, to be joined to Hall?"

"None that I can see. If Fox took Bessie to wife, he could not bring Kilworthy with him, for that goes with Julian."

"Exactly. It goes with Julian; but who will take her?"

"You have no second son."

"No, I have not."

"Surely you do not dream of making Luke your heir, and marrying him to Julian Crymes?"

"Luke!—who defied me by marrying Anthony to that hussy!"

"I thought not, brother, but—as the Lord is my helper—I see no other way of compassing it."

"It has never lightened on your mind that I might take a second wife."

"You!"—Magdalen fell back in her chair, and raised her hands in amazement. "You, brother Anthony! You."

"Even so," he answered, grimly. "I am not young, but I am lusty; I am a man of substance, and I reckon that Mistress Julian is not so besotted as was my son. She, I presume, has had a desire like to mine, that the two estates should be united, so as to make a large domain, and as she cannot effect this by marrying an unripe fool, she can gain the same end by taking me, a wise and mellow man of the world. The end is the same. The two properties are united, and Julian Crymes has ever struck me as having a clear and healthy mind. So—I doubt not—she will be as content to have me as that Merry Andrew and Jack o' the Green, who has thrown away himself at Willsworthy."

Magdalen's astonishment held her speechless for some time, at last, seeing that her brother was offended at the astonishment she exhibited, she said, "But, brother! Has she given you any—hopes?"

"She has not. I have not approached her on the subject, but I thought that you, as a woman, might sound her. Yet, I am

not without my reasons for believing that my suit would be accepted—though not immediately. Fox Crymes has given me reason to hope."

"Fox!—But what—"

"If you will have patience, Magdalen, and will allow me to conclude what I was saying, your mind will be more enlightened, and you will cease to express so unbecoming, such indecorous, so gross incredulity. You forget my position and my wealth. I am not, indeed, a Member of Parliament, as is my friend Crymes, but I might have been had my views been more favourable to the Catholic party. I have seen a good deal of Master Anthony Crymes, my godson, of late; he has been to Hall several times in the week, and then I threw out—in an uncertain way, and as if in sport—the notion that, as Anthony had proved false, and had disappointed Julian of her ambition to have the two estates united, I would consider about it, and might persuade myself to accommodate her views by stepping into the position thrown up by my son."

"And what did he say?"

"He did not open his mouth and eyes into a stare unbecoming to the face, and

impertinent to me. He accepted the proposition cordially. He saw nothing strange, preposterous, ridiculous in it. I should like to see," said the squire, working himself up in a white heat, "I should like to see any one, you, sister Magdalen, excepted, who would dare to find anything strange, preposterous, ridiculous in me, or in any proposition that I make."

"I tender ten thousand excuses," said Magdalen, humbly. "But brother, you entirely misunderstand me. If I gaped——"

"You did gape."

"I know I gaped and stared. I admit I opened my eyes wide. It was with astonishment at your genius, at the clever and unexpected way in which you overcame a great difficulty, and rallied after a great disappointment."

"Oh! It was that, was it?" asked the Squire, relaxing some of his severity and cooling.

"On my word as a gentlewoman, I never employed those words you attribute to me. Indeed I did not. The only expletives becoming are of a very different quality. So Fox agreed to the proposal?"

"Most heartily and warmly."

"But, brother, I misdoubt me if Fox has much influence with his sister. They are ever spitting and clawing at each other, and it hath appeared to me—and yet I may be wrong—that whatsoever the one suggests the other rejects; they make a point of conscience of differing from each other."

"All that," said the squire, "all that have I foreseen, and I have provided against it. The proposal shall not be covertly favoured by Fox. He shall, indeed, appear to set his face against it, but we shall make Bessie our means of breaking the ice, and drawing us together. I have some notion of letting Fox become Bessie's suitor—now, when he is accepted, and has——"

"But—brother!"

"What in the name of the seven stars do you mean by your buts thrown in whenever I speak? It is indecorous, it is insulting, Magdalen."

"I meant no harm, brother—all I ask is, has Bessie given her consent?"

"Bessie is not Anthony. What her father chooses, that she is ready to submit to. I have always insisted on her obedience in all things, and without questioning, to my will, and I have no reason to suppose that

in this matter she will go against my interests."

"But—brother!"

Master Cleverdon impatiently struck the table. "Did I not tell you, sister Magdalen, that your *buts* were an offence to me? Will you join with Anthony in resistance and rebellion against me—*me*, the head of the house? I have not come here, pray understand, to discuss this matter with you, as though it needed to be considered and determined upon conjointly between us, but to tell you what I have decided upon, and to require you, as you value my regard, and look for any advantages to be gotten from your connection with Hall, to support me, and to exercise all your influence for me, and not against me."

"You cannot suppose for one moment, brother, that I would do anything against you."

"I cannot say. Since Anthony revolted I have lost all confidence in every one. But I have no time to squander. Understand me. Persuade Bessie, should she show tokens of disobedience—which is catching as the plague—a dislike to submit herself in all things to my wishes, then you may hold

up Anthony as a warning to her, and let her understand that as I have dealt by him so I will deal by her if she resists me. Now you will see what is my intention. When Bessie is married to Anthony Crymes, they will live with me, for Anthony and Julian will be much forward and backward between the two houses, as Bessie is her best of friends, and thus she will come to see much of me and of Hall, and will be the more ready insensibly, so to speak, to slide into my arms, and into the union of the two estates. Not that I suppose at present she has any objection to me, but, as Fox says, she will require some justification before the world for taking the father after having been rejected by the son. If she is often over at Hall, why—all wonder will cease, and it will come about with the smoothness of an oiled wheel."

"I suppose so, brother—but—"

The squire started up with an oath. "I shall regard you as an opponent," he said, "with your eternal objections. Consider what I have said, and act on it, and so alone will you maintain your place in my regard."

Then he left the house, grumbling, and

slammed the door behind him, to impress on his sister how ill-pleased he was with her conduct.

Time had not filled the cleft between Anthony and his father; and Fox Crymes had done his best to prevent it from being filled or bridged over; for he now saw a good deal of the old Squire Cleverdon, and he took opportunity to drop a corrosive remark occasionally into the open and rankling wound, so as to inflame and anger it. Now it was a reported speech of Anthony showing how he calculated on his father's forgiveness, or a statement of what he would do to the house, or with the trees, when his father died and he succeeded to Hall, or else Fox told of some slighting remark on the beggary of everything at Willsworthy, made by a villager, or imagined for the occasion by himself.

The old man, without suspecting it, was being turned about the finger of the cunning young Crymes, who had made up his mind to obtain the hand of Elizabeth, and with it Hall. In this way could he satisfy his own ambition, and best revenge himself on Anthony and Urith.

The wit and malice of Fox acted as a

grinding-stone on which the anger of the Squire was being constantly whetted, as if it had not at the first been sharp enough.

The old man could not endure the idea of his property ever falling to the daughter of Richard Malvine—of Malvine blood ever reigning within the walls of his mansion.

He had not yet altered his will, and he could not resolve how to do this. He did not desire to constitute Bessie his heiress. He could not reconcile himself to the thought of Hall passing out of the direct line, of another than a Cleverdon owning the estate where his ancestors had sat for centuries, and which he had made into his own freehold. All the disgust he had felt when Elizabeth was born, and he found himself father of a daughter as his first-born, woke up again, and he could not bring himself to constitute her his heiress. Yet, on the other hand, it was equally, if not more, against his will that it should pass to his revolted son and the daughter of his mortal enemy. As he was thus tossing between two odious alternatives, the idea of marrying Julian himself lightened on his mind, and he seized it with desperate avidity; yet not without a doubt he refused to

give utterance to, or permit in another. In a vague manner he hoped that the union of Fox and Bessie might pave the way to his own marriage with Julian.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A WIDENING OF THE RIFT.

"URITH," said Anthony, "we are to go together to the dance at the Cakes; I have said we would."

"The dance, Anthony! It cannot be."

"Why not? Because I particularly desire it?"

"Nay—not so, assuredly; but the time is so short since my mother's death."

"But our marriage makes that as nought. It has turned the house of mourning into one of merriment—or—it should have done so. It suffices that I intend to go, and I will take you with me."

"Nay—Anthony, I would not cross you——"

"You do—you object." He spoke with irritation. "Do you not see, Urith, that

this life of seclusion is intolerable to me? I have been unaccustomed to the existence which befits a hermit. I have been wont to attend every merry-making that took place —to laugh and dance and sing there, and eat and drink and be happy. I protest that it is to me as displeasing to be without my amusements as it would be to a kingfisher to be without his brook, or to a peewit to be condemned to a cage."

"But cannot you go without me?" asked Urith, disconcerted.

"No; it will be noted and remarked on. You are my wife—you are a bride. You ought to, you must appear where others are. Why should you spend all your life in the loneliness of this—this Willsworthy? Do you not feel as cramped by it as must have felt Noah in the Ark?"

"I do not, Anthony."

"You do not, because you have never been out of the Ark, bred in it, you are accustomed to its confined atmosphere. I am not. I love to meet with and be merry with my fellows, and I cannot go alone. Why, Urith, on the fair day I went to Kilworthy, and there was Bessie. What did she say to me, but—'You should not be

here, be at any entertainment in a neighbour's house without Urith?' "

"Did Bessie say that?"

"Yes, she did."

"Then I will go with you to the Cakes, Anthony."

It was customary in former times for the gentlefolks of a neighbourhood to meet at each other's houses, at intervals, for dances and carouses—the young folks for dances, their elders for carouses. On such occasions the burden of entertainment did not fall wholly, or to any serious extent, on the host in whose house the assembly took place. Each guest brought with him or her a contribution to the feast—ducks, geese, capons, eggs, cheese, bottles of wine, pasties, honey, fruit, candles, flowers—very much as at a picnic nowadays, each party invited contributes something. The host actually furnished little more than the use of his house. Even the servants of the guests were expected to assist, and generally attended on their own masters and mistresses, behind whose chairs they stationed themselves.

The Cakes occupied a quaint old barton, named Wringworthy, in a central position

for the neighbourhood; and they had an excellent hall for a dance, well appreciated by the young gentlefolks of the neighbourhood.

The evening for the dance arrived. Folk went early to a dance in those days, before the darkness had set in. Many were on the road; none in coaches: all on horseback—the young ladies seated on pads behind their grooms.

Clattering along at a good pace came Fox, riding alongside of Elizabeth Cleverdon. He had gone to Hall to fetch her. She was annoyed: she did not understand the attention, in her simple mind. The idea never entered that he had designs on her hand. She did not wish to feel prejudiced against him; at the same time she did not like him, and was unable to account to herself for this dislike.

Her father made much of him. Fox was now constantly at Hall, and had made himself companionable to the old man. Bessie with pain contrasted his conduct with that of her brother, who had never put himself out of the way to be agreeable to his father—had not courted his society and sought to be a companion to him. She was grateful to Fox

for his efforts to relieve the old Squire of his desolation by giving him so much of his society.

Fox was her brother's friend, and she had no doubt that he was at Hall with the purpose of doing his utmost to further a reconciliation between Anthony and his father. For this she thanked him in her heart, yet could not stifle the dislike that would spring up and assert itself notwithstanding. Nor did she like the look that Fox cast at her occasionally. He meant no harm, doubtless: he was but showing her that he was acting as her confederate in the cause which, as she trusted, both had at heart. Nevertheless, she wished he would not look at her with that cunning, wounding twinkle in his eyes.

Presently Fox and Bessie caught up Anthony riding with Urith on pillion behind him. Fox greeted them boisterously, and Bessie threw him and Urith a kiss. Anthony acknowledged Fox's greeting with warmth, but that of his sister with a little coldness. He was annoyed with her for her tameness in submitting to her father. There was no opportunity for more than a word, as Fox urged on his horse and that of Elizabeth

Cleverdon, with his whip, to a pace with which Anthony was unable to keep up. The old Willsworthy mare was a clumsy piece of horseflesh, not comparable in any way with the beasts from Hall and Kilworthy stables. Anthony was aware of this, and somewhat ashamed.

On reaching the house of the Cakes, the sound of music was audible—a couple of fiddles, a bass, and a clarionette ; but, in the noise of voices, salutations, and laughter, the melody was drowned ; only occasionally the deep grunt of the bass, and the shrill wail of the clarionette, like that of a teething babe, were audible.

The hall was full. It was not large, as we nowadays reckon size ; but it was of sufficient size to accommodate a good many, and not so large as to make them feel chilled by the vastness of the space. From the hall opened a parlour, in which were set out card-tables for the elders.

Directly Anthony and his wife entered, Bessie signed to Urith to sit by her. She was uneasy at the pointed way in which Fox paid her attention, kept near her, and talked with her. She could see that his conduct had attracted notice, and that she

was the subject of a good deal of remark. She was sad at heart—little inclined for merriment: but she had come, as her father desired it; and, always conscientious, and desirous to sink her own feelings so as not to disturb and distress others, she concealed her inner sadness, and assumed a gentle, pleased manner natural to her when in company. She had been wont from early childhood to shut up her troubles within her heart from every eye, and to wear a composed exterior; consequently this was less difficult to her now than it might have been to others less self-disciplined.

Urith, moreover, was not best satisfied to find herself at a merry-making so shortly after her mother's death; and, besides, was so wholly unaccustomed to one, that she felt frightened and bewildered. She snatched at once at the chance of sitting by Bessie, as a relief to the painful sense of loneliness and confusion in which she was, confused by the crowd that whirled about her—lonely in the midst of it, because strange to most of those composing it. Anthony was among friends. He knew every one, and was greeted heartily by all the young people, male and female; but she was thrust aside

by them as they pushed forward to welcome him, and she was jostled outside the throng which had compacted itself round him.

At the most favourable time she would have felt strange there, for her mother had never taken her to any rout at a neighbour's house; she had been to no dances, no dinners—had been kept entirely aloof from all the whirl of bright and butterfly life that had made country life so enjoyable; and now she was oppressed with the inner consciousness of the impropriety of appearing at a dance at such a brief interval after the earth had closed over her mother. At once, with nervous self-consciousness, Urith rushed into self-exculpation.

"I would not have come—indeed, I did not wish to come; but Anthony insisted. He said he could not come without me; you had told him that, and—I did not wish to stand in the way of his pleasures. He has worked very hard; he has been cut off from his usual associates; he has had no holiday—so I thought it well to come."

"Yes, you did right. You will find Anthony exacting. That he always was, but good at heart," said Bessie.

"I do not dance myself—I cannot dance,"

said Urith in further self-excuse; "so that it will not seem so very strange my being here if I simply look on."

"You will have to dance—to open the ball with Anthony, I suppose, as you are the bride."

"I! Oh, but I do not know how to dance. I never have danced. I do not understand the figures. I do not distinguish between a brawl, a rant, and a jig."

"That is unfortunate—but it will serve to excuse you; yet I think you must essay to foot it once with Anthony. He is certain to insist on it."

"But I do not know——" Urith flushed. "How can I dance when I have never practised the measures and the paces?"

At that moment Anthony came up.

"Come, Urith," said he; "we must open the ball. All are waiting for you."

"But I cannot, Anthony."

He made a movement of impatience. "Nonsense; you must!" That was in his old imperious manner, which Bessie knew so well.

Bessie said aside to Urith, "Make the attempt. You cannot well go wrong."

Urith stood up—nervous, trembling, turn-

ing white and red, and with the tears very near the surface.

"Look here," said Anthony. "Father thinks, because I am thrust out of Hall, that every one may kick at me—that I am of no account any more. Let us show that it is otherwise. Let them see that I am something still, and that my wife is not a nobody. Come!" He whisked her to her place at the head of the room.

Urith saw that all eyes were on her, and this increased her nervousness. As she passed Fox she caught his malicious eye, and saw the twirl of laughter and cruel jest on his lip.

"I cannot—and let me alone, Anthony," escaped her again. She was frightened.

"Have done. I do not want you here to make a fool of yourself and me; and that you will do if you slink back to your place."

"But I cannot dance, Anthony."

"Folly! I will put you to-rights. With half a pinch of wit you cannot go wrong."

The music struck up, the clarionette squealed, the violins sawed, and the bass grunted. In a moment Urith was caught away—felt herself swung, flying, she knew not where. She knew not what she

was doing. She could neither keep step with the music, nor discover the direction in which she had to go. She saw faces —faces on every side—full of laughter, amusement, mockery. She was thrown adrift from Anthony, was groping for his hand; could not see him, could not tell where he was, what she had to do; got in the way of other dancers, was knocked across the floor, knocked back again; ran between couples—then, all at once, she was 'ware of Anthony pushing his way to her, with an angry face, and an exclamation of, "You are no good at all; get back to your chair. I won't dance with you again and be made a laughing-stock of."

He left her, where he had thrust her out of the dance, to find her way back to Bessie, and strode off to Julian, caught her by the hand, and in a moment was fully engaged.

He was maddened with vexation. It was unendurable to him that he had been the occasion of laughter. Every other girl and woman in the room, however plain, could dance—only his wife not. She alone must sit against the wall! That it was his fault in forcing her to come against her wishes—his fault in making her attempt to do what

she had protested her ignorance of—he did not recognize. The wife of Anthony Cleverdon ought to take a prominent place—ought to be able to dance, and dance well—ought to be handsomer, better dressed, more able to make herself agreeable, than any other woman! And there she was—helpless! Handsome, indeed; but with her beauty disguised by an unbecoming dress; silent, sulky, on the verge of tears. It was enough to make his heart fill with gall!

On the other hand, here was Julian Crymes in charming costume, bright of eye, fresh of colour, full of wit and banter, moving easily in the dance, light, confident, graceful. Julian was glowing with pleasure; her dark eyes flashed with the fire that burned in her soul, and the hot blood rolled boiling through her veins.

For some moments after she had taken her seat Urith was unable to see anything. The tears of shame and disappointment filled her eyes, and she was afraid of being observed to wipe them away.

But Bessie took her hand, and pressed it, and said, "No wonder you were agitated at this first appearance in company. No one will think anything of it, no doubt they

will say you are a young and modest bride. There, do not be discouraged; the same would have happened to me in your circumstances. What—must I?"

The last words were addressed to Fox, who came up to ask her to dance with him. She would gladly have excused herself, but that she thought a dance was owing to him for his courtesy in coming to Hall to accompany her.

"I am not inclined for more than one or two turns this evening," she said to Fox; "for there are many here younger than I, and I would not take from them the dances they enjoy so much more than myself."

As the tears dried without falling in Urith's eyes, and her heart beat less tumultuously, she was able to look about her, and seek and find Anthony.

It was with a stab of pain in her heart that she saw him with Julian. They were talking together with animation, her great eyes were fixed on him, and he bent his head over her. Urith knew the heart of Julian—knew the disappointed love, the rage, that consumed it; and she wondered at her husband for singling this girl out as his partner. Then she reproached herself;

for, she argued, that this heart, with its boiling sea of passion, had been revealed to her, not to him. He was unconscious of it.

Urith followed him and Julian everywhere; noted the changes in his countenance when she spoke; felt a twinge of anguish when, for a moment, both their eyes met hers, and they said something to each other and laughed. Had they laughed at her awkwardness in the opening dance?

Elizabeth passed before her on Fox's arm, and, as they did so, she heard Fox say, "Yes, your brother is content now that he is with Julian. You can't root old love out with a word."

Bessie winced, turned sharply round, and looked at Urith, in the hopes that this ill-considered speech had not been heard by her. But a glance showed that Urith had not been deaf: her colour had faded to an ashen white, and a dead film had formed over her sombre eyes, like cat-ice on a pool.

Bessie drew her partner away, and said, with agitated voice, "You should not have spoken thus—within earshot of Urith."

"Why not? Sooner or later she must know it—the sooner the better."

Bessie loosened herself from him, angry

and hurt. "I will dance with you no more," she said. "You have a strange way of speaking words that are like burrs—they stick and annoy, and are hard to tear away."

She went back to take her place by Urith, but found it occupied. She was therefore unable at once to use her best efforts to neutralize the effect produced by what Fox had said.

Urith's face had become grave and colourless, the dark brows were drawn together, and the gloomy eyes had recovered some life or light; but it was that of a Jack-o'-Lantern—a wild fire playing over them.

Anthony danced repeatedly with Julian. The delight of being with him again, of having him as her partner—wholly to herself—if only for a few minutes, filled her with intoxication of pleasure, and disregard of who saw her, and what was said concerning her. Her heart was like a flaming tuft of gorse, blazing fiercely, brightly, with intense heat for a brief space, to leave immediately after a blank spot of black ash and a few glowing sparks; and Anthony stooped over her enveloped in this flame, accepting the flattering homage, forgetful of his responsibilities, regardless of the future, without a thought

as to the consequences. Her bosom heaved, her breath came hot and fast, her full lips trembled.

Urith's eyes were never off them, and ever darker grew her brow, more sinister the light in her eyes, and the more colourless her cheek.

Suddenly she sprang up. The room was swimming around her; she needed air, and she ran forth into the night. The sky was full of twilight, and there was a rising moon. Though it was night, it was not dark.

She stood in the road, gasping for air, holding the gate. Then she saw coming along the road a dark object, and heard the measured tramp of horses' hoofs. It was a carriage. Along that road, at midnight, so it was said, travelled nightly a death-coach, in which sat a wan lady, drawn by headless horses, with on the box a headless driver.

For a moment Urith was alarmed, but only for a moment. The spectral coach travelled noiselessly; of this that approached the sound of the horse-hoofs, of the wheels, and the crack of the whip of the driver were audible.

The carriage drew up before the entrance-

gates of the house, and a gentleman thrust forth his head.

"Ho! there! Do you belong to the house? Run in, summon Anthony Crymes. Tell him his father wants him—immediately."

CHAPTER XXIX.

CAUTIONS.

URITH entered the hall again, and told Fox that his father was without, and wanted him.

"My father!" exclaimed young Crymes. "Oh! he is home from the Session of Parliament, where they and the King have been engaged in offering each other humble pie, for which neither party has a taste. What does he want with me?"

"I did not inquire," answered Urith, haughtily.

Mr. Crymes had not known her in the road, when he called out to her to send his son to him.

Fox was annoyed to have to leave the dance, but he could not disobey his father, so he took his hat and coat, and went forth.

Mr. Crymes was waiting for him, in the coach.

"I heard, on my way, you were here. Stirring times, my boy, when we must be up and doing."

"So am I, father; you took me off from a saraband."

"Fie on it! I don't mean dancing. Come into the coach, and sit with me. I have much to say."

"Am I to desert my partners?"

"In faith! I reckon the maids will be content to find another better favoured than thee, Tonie."

Fox reluctantly entered the carriage, but not till he had made another effort to be excused.

"Julian is here, is she to be left without an escort?"

"Julian has her attendants, and will be rejoiced to be free from your company, as when together ye mostly spar."

When the coach was in movement, Mr. Crymes said, "I have come back into the country, for, indeed, it is time that they who love the Constitution of their country and their religion should be preparing for that struggle which is imminent."

"I thought, father," said Fox, "you were sent up to Westminster to fight the battle there. It is news to me that warfare is to be carried on by Cut and Run. I suppose you were in risk of being sent to the Tower?"

The old man was offended.

"It will oblige me if you reserve your sarcasms for others than your own father. I come home, and you sneer at me."

"Not at all; you mistake. I wondered how the Constitution was to be preserved here, when the great place of doctoring and drenching the patient, of bleeding and cupping, is at Westminster, and you were sent thither to tender your advice as to how that same Constitution was to be dealt with."

"The battle is not to be fought there," said Mr. Crymes, "nor with tongues. The field of conflict will be elsewhere, and the weapons keener and harder than words."

"The field of conflict is, I trust, not to be here," remarked Fox; "your sagacity, father, has assuredly taken you to the furthest possible distance from it. As soon as these weapons stronger than tongues are brandished, I shall betake me to Lundy or the Scilly Isles."

"You are a coward, I believe," said Mr. Crymes, in a tone of annoyance. "I expect to find in you—or, rather, but for my experience of you, I might have reckoned on finding in my son—a nobler temper than that of a runaway."

"But, my good father, what other are you?"

"If you will know," said Mr. Crymes, petulantly, "I have come into the country—here into the West—to rouse it."

"What for?"

"For the cause of the Constitution and Religion."

"And when the West is roused, what is it to do? Stretch itself, and lie down to sleep again?"

"Nothing of the kind, Tonie. I do not mind confiding to you that we expect a revolution. It is not possible to endure what is threatened. The country will—it must—rise, or will lose its right to be considered a free and Protestant country." Mr. Crymes waited, but, as his son said nothing, he continued. "The Duke of Monmouth is in the Low Countries, and is meditating an invasion. The Dutch will assist; he is coming with a fleet, and several companies

levied in Holland, and we must be organized and ready with our bands to rise as soon as he sets foot in England."

"Not I," said Fox. "If you, father, venture your neck and bowels for Monmouth and the Protestant cause, I content myself with tossing up my cap for King James. Monmouth's name is James as well as his Majesty's, so my cap will not compromise me with either; and, father, I only toss up my cap—I will not risk my neck or bowels for either by drawing sword."

"You are a selfish, unprincipled rogue," said Mr. Crymes. "You have neither regard for your country nor ambition for yourself."

"As for my country, I can best care for it by protecting such a worthy member of it as myself, and my ambition lies in other lines than political disturbance. I have not heard that either side got much, but rather lost, by taking parts in the Great Rebellion, whether for the Parliament or for the King. The only folk who gained were such as put their hands in their pockets and looked on."

"By the Lord!" exclaimed the old gentleman, "I am sorry that I have such a

son, without enthusiasm, and care for aught save himself. I tell you the Earl of Bedford secretly inclines to the cause of Monmouth, and has urged me to come down here and stir the people up. Now, when his Lordship——"

"Exactly," scoffed Fox. "Exactly as I thought, he keeps safe and throws all the risk on you. Nothing could so induce me to caution as the example of the Earl of Bedford."

In the mean time, Bessie, at the dance, was in some uneasiness. She had missed Urith when she went out of the house, and, after her return, noticed that her face was clouded, and that she was short of speech. Bessie took Urith's hand in her lap and caressed it. She did not fully understand what was distressing her sister-in-law. At first she supposed it was annoyance at her failure in dancing, but soon perceived that the cause was other. Urith no longer responded to her caresses, and Bessie, looking anxiously into her dark face and following the direction of her eyes, discovered that the conduct of Anthony was the occasion of Urith's displeasure. Anthony was not engaged to Julian for every

dance, but he singled her out and got her as his partner whenever he could, and it was apparent that she took no pleasure in dancing with any one else; she either feigned weariness to excuse her acceptance of another partner, or danced with him without zest, and with an abstracted mind that left her speechless.

Bessie Cleverdon, the last person in the room to think hardly of another, the most ready to excuse the conduct of another, was hard put to it to justify her brother's conduct. He did not come to his wife between the dances, treating her with indifference equal to a slight, and he lavished his attentions on Julian Crymes in a manner that provoked comment.

"They are old friends, have known each other since they were children, have been like cousins, almost as brother and sister," said Bessie, when she felt Urith's hand clench and harden within her own as Anthony and Julian passed them by without notice, engrossed in each other.

"You must think nothing of it—indeed you must not. Anthony is pleased to meet an old acquaintance and talk over old times. It is nothing other," again she protested, as

Urith started and quivered. The bride had encountered Julian's eye, and Julian had flashed at her a look of scorn and gratified revenge. She was fulfilling her threat, she was plucking the rose out of Urith's bosom.

Presently, Julian came across the room to Bessie, with eyes averted from Urith.

"Come with me," said she to Bessie Cleverdon. "I want a word with you, I am hot with dancing. Come outside the porch." She put her arm within that of Anthony's sister, and drew her forth on the drive, outside.

When there, Julian said, "Bessie, what is this I hear on all sides. Are you engaged?"

"Engaged! What do you mean?"

"Engaged to Fox. I am told of it by first one and then another; moreover, his attentions to you were marked, and all noticed them, that has given strength to the general belief."

"It is not true. It is not true!" exclaimed Bessie, becoming crimson with shame and annoyance, "who can have set such a wicked story afloat?"

"Nay, I cannot tell that. Who can trace a piece of gossip? But the talk is about, in

the air, everywhere. There must be some foundation for it."

"None at all, I assure thee — most seriously, and most honestly, none at all. You pain me inexpressibly, Julian. Deny it whenever you hear it. Contradict it, as you love me."

"I do love thee," answered Julian, "and for that reason I have hoped it was false, for I pity the maid that listens to Fox's tongue and believes his words. If it be true——"

"It is not true; it has not a barleycorn of truth in it."

"But he has been much at Hall, every week, almost every other day."

"Because he is Anthony's friend, and he is doing what he can for him with my father."

Julian laughed. "Nay, never, never reckon on that. Fox will do no good turn to any one, leastwise to Anthony. He goes twice or thrice a week to Hall on other concern than his own! As well might the hills dance. Trust me, if he has been to Hall so oft, it has been that he sought ends and advantages of his own. I never knew Fox hold out the end of his riding-whip to help a friend."

"That may be," said Bessie Cleverdon. "But he has not come for me. I pray let my name be set aside. I have nothing to do with him. He has not so much as breathed a word touching such matters to me. I pray you deny this whenever you hear it, and to whomsoever you speak concerning it."

Julian laughed.

"I am glad I have thy word that there is naught in it, as far as thou art concerned. I spoke of it to Anthony, and he also laughed me out of countenance thereat. But he trusts Fox. I would not trust him save to trip up, or stab in the back, an enemy. Do'st know, Bess, what notion came on me? I fancied that Fox was seeking thee, because he reckoned that the strife between Anthony and his father would never skin over, and that the old man would make thee his heir."

"No! no!" exclaimed Elizabeth, in distress. "Do not say such things, do not think such things. I am certain that you mistake Fox. He is not so bad as you paint him."

"What! you take up the single-stick to fight in his defence?"

"I will fight in defence of any man who is maligned. I cannot think of Fox what you say. I pray, say no more hereon. You pain me past words to express, and there really is no ground for what you do say.

"Take care! take care! Bess. I know Fox better than do you, better than does any one else, and he may yet play you such a move as will checkmate you."

Elizabeth did not answer. The two girls took a turn on the lawn together, and Bessie drew Julian's arm tighter to her side; she even laid her disengaged hand on her shoulder, clinging to her, as a suppliant.

The attitude, her manner were so full of entreaty, that Julian halted in her walk, turned to her, and asked, "What is it that you want, Bess?"

"My dear — dear Julian," Elizabeth stroked Julian's arm with her gentle hand, "Oh, Julian! Do I pray thee not dance any more with Anthony."

"Why not, Bess?"

Elizabeth hesitated. She was unwilling, almost unable to express her reasons. An unrest was in her bosom, a fear in her heart, but nothing had taken distinct shape.

"My dear, dear Julian, I entreat you not.

You should feel that it were fit that my brother should dance this evening with his wife—with Urith."

"She can no more dance than a goose," answered Julian Crymes, bluntly.

"That is true—I mean, she cannot dance very well; but it is not seemly that she be left out altogether, and that he should be so much with you."

"Why not? We are old friends."

"Do you not feel, Julian, that it is unfitting? She—I mean Urith—must feel hurt."

"She is hurt!" repeated Julian, with a thrill of triumph in her voice; but this Bessie did not notice. It never for a moment occurred to her that it could give exultation to Julian to know that she had pained another.

"Indeed, you must consider," pursued Bessie. "The poor young thing has not had the chance of learning to dance, and Anthony is without much thought; he seeks his pleasure. Young men do not think, or do not understand the hearts of girls. I watched Urith, and I believe that every step you took trod on her heart."

"It did!" Her tone shocked Bessie,

who for a moment released her arm and looked in her face, but in the darkness could not see the expression.

"Indeed it did," she continued; "for, as she could not dance, it seemed a slight and forgetfulness of her that she was left to sit out, and Anthony amused himself with you and with others. He meant no harm, I know that very well; but, nevertheless, he hurt her much, and she bled with inward pain. She was shamed, and should not have been shamed before a great many people on her first appearance after her marriage, at a rout."

"You should administer your exhortations, Bess, to Anthony. I have not the custody and responsibility of that wild, vixenish colt, Urith."

"I cannot get a word with Anthony, and you, Julian, are dancing with him three times to any other partner's one."

"Would you have him sit down at her side and twiddle his thumbs, like a disgraced child in a corner?"

"I would have him and you think of the feelings of a young girl who is sad at heart," said Bessie, gravely. Julian's tone distressed her; a glimmer of the true condi-

tion of affairs entered her mind and filled it with horror and indignation.

"Julian," she said, in a firmer tone, with less of appeal in it and more of command, "at one time I used to think that we were like to become sisters——"

"What, by your taking Fox? It is not too late."

"Do not—do not banter on that subject. You know my meaning. I did suppose that Anthony would have sought his happiness in you. But it has pleased God to order it otherwise. Now he must find his happiness —not at Kilworthy, nor at Hall, but at poor little Willsworthy, that bleak moor farm, and not with you, but with Urith. He has sacrificed a great deal for her—lost his home, lost his father, almost lost me, has given up wealth and position, and he must be compensated for these losses in his own new home. It is not right that you—that any one should do anything to spoil this chance, to rob him of his compensation in full. Anthony can be nothing to you for the future. Leave him alone. Do not play with him, do not draw him away from Urith. He has now already mighty odds against him; do not, for God's sake, do not any-

thing that may make the odds overwhelming, and blight and ruin his happiness here and for ever. For, Julian, it is now, in the first months of marriage, that his state will be determined one way or the other. Mar the concord between him and his wife now, and it may never again be found; and that concord lost, with it to wreck goes the whole life of my brother. If ever, Julian, you had any love for Anthony, if now you have any kindly feeling towards him, let him alone."

She paused and waited for an answer. None came, Julian walked faster, dragged her up and down the lawn as she clung to her.

"It was Anthony's doing that Urith came to-night; she was averse to appear, but he insisted on it. She told him she could not dance; he forced her to take her place with him at the head of the room for a measure. Did she ever seek him out? Never. He thrust himself upon her. When her mother died, she had no desire to be hurried into marriage, but he overruled all her objections. He, ever thoughtless, inconsiderate of others, has taken her up out of her old course of life——"

"Enough, enough, about her," said Julian, "when you speak of her my anger foams. Speak of him, of his happiness jeopardized, and I cool. What! Has it come to this, that I—I in my gloveless hands hold the fortunes, hold the hearts of these two, to beat and batter them together, and crush and break them both? What if I threaten to do it?"

"You are too good at heart to make the threat, or, if made, to make it good."

Julian was silent again. She took several turns in front of the house. The sounds of revelry streamed out to them. Through the open porch door, along with the light, and occasionally in the porch itself came a flash of colour as a girl stood there in her bright tinted dress with the blaze of the candles upon her. Bats were wheeling, and their shrill scream pierced the ear.

"Let me alone, Bess," said Julian. "I cannot breathe, I cannot think when you are by me; my head is like a weir, and all my thoughts tumble, boiling, spattering over, beaten to foam."

Elizabeth withdrew to the porch, where she seated herself, and watched the excited girl on the lawn. She had put her hands

to her head and was still pacing up and down, now fast, then slowly, according as her passion or her good nature prevailed.

Then out at the door came Anthony, shouting, "Where is Julian? She promised to dance the Mallard with me. Bessie, have you seen her? I claim her for the Mallard."

Julian heard his voice, and stepped back under the shade of a bank of yews. There was before her gravel, and in that gravel a piece of white spar that shone like a flake of snow in the dark. If she stepped out to that piece of spar he would see her, claim her, and—her evil nature would have got the upper hand. Whither would it lead her? She did not ask that. She saw before her now only the alternative of a half-hour's mad pleasure on the arm of Anthony, of cruel triumph over his already humiliated wife, or else abandonment of the contest.

The struggle was over with unexpected brevity. The tune of the Mallard struck up, and Anthony went back into the hall without her, to seek for her there, or to find there another partner.

Then Julian heard the burst of voices in song, for the Mallard was a country dance led by two, with chorus by all the performers

as they turned their partners, and went in chain with linked, reversed arms, down the room.

SHE: When lambkins skip, and apples are growing,
Grass is green, and roses ablow,
When pigeons coo, and cattle are lowing,
Mist lies white in the vale as snow.

CHORUS: Why should we be all the day toiling?
Lads and lasses along with me!
Done with drudgery, dust, and moiling,
Haste away to the greenwood tree.

HE: The cows are milked, the teams are a-stable,
Work is over with set of sun,
Ye farmer lads, all lusty and able,
Ere the moon rises begins our fun.

CHORUS: Why should we, &c.

Julian came to the porch to Elizabeth.

"Go," said she, "tell my servants to make ready. I will return home. I will not go indoors again, till the horses are at the door. My father has returned, and Fox is with him. Be that my excuse."

Bessie put up both her hands to the face of Julian, drew down her head to her, and kissed her. Then she disappeared.

Julian remained without, listening to the ballet.

SHE: O sweet it is to foot on the clover,
Ended work, and revel begun,
Aloft the planets never give over,
Dancing, circling round the sun.

CHORUS: Why should we, &c.

HE: So Ralph and Phil, and Robin and Willie,
Kiss your partners, each of you now;
So Bet and Prue, and Dolly and Celie,
Make your curtsey; lads! make a bow.

CHORUS: Why should we be all the day toiling?
Lads and lasses along with me!
Done with drudgery, dust, and moiling,
Haste away to the greenwood tree.*

* The traditional music to this country dance in "Songs of the West," Methuen & Co., Bury St., W.C.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE RIDE HOME.

When Julian Crymes had departed, it appeared to Anthony that the dance had lost its principal charm, and he wearied of it.

"Come, Urith," said he; "I think we will go. It is late." This was almost the only time he had spoken to her since the opening dance.

"I am ready," she answered; "have been so for two hours."

He went forth to see after the horse, and had it brought round to the door. He took his place in the saddle, and Urith sat behind him. They rode forth from the grounds into the high road, along which their course lay for a mile and a half, after which it diverged over moor. Anthony did not speak, and

Urith remained equally silent. She had her hand on his belt, and he felt the pressure. He was vexed with her; she had not done him credit that evening. She was uncouth, and unfit to associate with people accustomed to social intercourse—unable to take a part in the amusements such as is expected of every young person. She was decently dressed, but without richness and refinement of taste, and in an old-fashioned gown that had been her mother's. The blood rushed into his head as he thought of how folks must have laughed at him and her when she failed in the opening dance. She was the bride of the evening; every one was prepared to concede to her the place of pre-eminence, but she had shown herself wholly incapable of occupying the place offered her. Then how uninteresting she had appeared beside the other girls present! Their faces had been radiant with mirth, hers dull with discontent and ill-humour.

What if he had appeared there with Julian as his bride? How different all would have been! She would have been well, handsomely dressed, and in all the inherited jewellery of the Glanvilles. She would not have sat a whole evening mum

against the wall. She would have shown herself queen of the revel. A warm breath, sweet as if laden with gorse essence, fanned his face at the thought, and was followed at once by a sharp and icy blast. Julian had been refused by him with all her wealth, her rank, her accomplishments, her beauty, and what had he acquired instead?

How could he have supposed that Urith was devoid of all those feminine delicacies of manner which enable a woman to place herself at ease in all society? She had thrown a cold wet blanket over his joy on this first coming forth into the world from his seclusion at Willsworthy. Then Anthony went on spinning at the same dark thread of ideas. He asked himself what there was in Urith that had attracted him, why it was that he had been so infatuated as to throw his luck to the winds so as to possess her. When the head begins to reckon, then the heart is on the way to bankruptcy.

He counted over the advantages he had rejected, measured the sacrifices he had made for Urith's love, and he asked what she could throw into the scale to outweigh all this?

His hand twitched the bridle, and made the horse toss his head and plunge.

Urith also was occupied with her own thoughts. It had been a relief to her to get away from the laughter and music and revelry of Wringworthy; she thought that, could she be away from the heated room and swaling candles, in the cool night air, under the stars, her tranquillity of mind would return. But it was not so. Anthony's silence, her sense of having offended him by her clumsiness, her dread lest his love for her should be cooling, above all, the haunting spectre of a fear lest Julian should be fulfilling her threat, and be weaning from her the heart of her husband, followed her, and filled her blood with fever. But she strove against this fear, fought it with all the weapons at her command. It was impossible that his love, so strong, so unselfish, which had cost him so much, should evaporate, and that his heart should sway about like a weathercock. The resolution wherewith he had pursued his end, that proved him to have a strong character, and not one that is turned about in every direction.

He had some excuse for being out of humour. He was proud of her. He had

desired to let all see what a woman he had got as his wife. He was disappointed, and the depth of his disappointment was the measure of his pride in her.

But then there rose up before her mind the picture of Julian on Anthony's arm, with burning cheeks and bright eyes, looking up in his face, and his eyes resting upon her with a warmth that should be in them only when fixed on the face of his wife. Did she not know that glow in his countenance? That fire in his eye? Had he not looked at her in the same way before they were married?

"Do you intend to drag me off my horse?" asked Anthony, "that you pull at my belt so roughly?"

"And you, that you draw the rein so short and make the mare rear?"

Urith knew nothing of the world. It had ever seemed to her inconceivable that after the bond and seal of marriage the thought of either should stray; that any one should dare to dream of loving a man who was pledged in heart and mind and soul to another woman. Yet Julian as much as told her she still loved Anthony, would use all her fascinations to draw him to her and

away from his wife. Was Anthony so weak that his conscience would suffer him to be thus attracted from the place of duty? No —a thousand times, no. He was not so feeble, so lacking in moral strength as this.

They had turned off the high road upon the moor. Here was no stoned road, no road that lay white in the darkness before them, but turf, by daylight recognizable as a road by hoof marks, and the fret of feet over the turf. By night it could be followed only by observing stones set up at intervals and capped with whitewash. Stones had been picked off the roadway and thrown on one side, so that the turf was smooth almost as a racecourse. The head of the horse was turned now somewhat easterly. The sky above the rugged moor range was silvery, and from behind a rocky crest rose the moon, doubled in size by the haze that hung over the moor, and seemed like a mighty flame of the purest white light.

"There, there!" said Urith. "Do you see, Anthony; the moon is up above that old Lyke Way, along which we made our first journey together."

She disengaged her hand from his belt, and put it round his waist.

He raised his head and looked away to the east, at the ridge of moor and rock, black against the glittering orb. He remembered then how he had mounted her on his horse—how he had stood by her and looked into her eyes! He recalled the strange magic that had then come over him—a longing for her, mingled with a presentiment of evil—a fear lest she were drawing him on to destruction. That fear was verified—she had lured him on to his ruin. He was a ruined man; he had lost all that he valued—the esteem of his fellows, the comforts and luxuries of life. Then began again the odious and monotonous enumeration of the sacrifices he had made.

Why did Urith remind him of that ride? Did she want to find occasion to reproach him? Was it not enough that he was scourging himself with the whips of his own thoughts for his precipitate folly in marrying her?

But Urith was not at that moment thinking of reproach. She breathed moor air, was beyond hedges and enclosures, in the open, vast, uncultivated heather-land, and there her brain had cooled, and her heart had recovered composure. The atmosphere

was other than that of a ball-room, which had filled her with intoxication, and had bred phantoms that had affrighted her.

As he rode on, with the light of the rising moon on his face, Anthony felt the pressure of Urith's hand below his heart. The pressure was slight, and yet it weighed heavy on him, and interfered with his breathing; that light hand as it rose and fell with the motion of the horse; and at each inhalation seemed to strike reproachfully against his side, to knock, and bid him open to better thoughts.

How was it that he was so changed—that he, who had forced himself on the reluctant Urith, had not let her alone till she had yielded to his persistency to precipitate the marriage—that he should be trying to shift the blame on her? If he had made sacrifices to win her, she had not invited him to do so; he had done it with his eyes open—he had done it moved by no other influence, urged by his own caprice solely.

It had never occurred to him that Urith had made sacrifices on her part; that he had demanded them of her, and given her no rest till they were made. He had made her marry him against her conscience and wishes, too quickly after her mother's death,

and against her mother's dying orders. But he considered that what was done could not be undone, that as he had made his bed, so must he lie, as he had laden himself, so he must trudge. What then was the use of repining, and fretting over the past?

"Yet—it was the Lyke Way," he said, in a low tone, "the way of death, on which we set our feet together."

"No," she said, "not altogether." She released her hand from his heart, and placed it on the arm that held the bridle. "Stay the mare a moment, Tony."

"Why?"

"I have something to tell you."

"Can you not say it as we ride on—it is late?"

"No—stay the mare."

He drew rein.

"Well—what is it?" he asked, a little impatiently.

She looked round.

"We are quite alone?"

"Yes—of course—who else could be here?"

Then she put her hand on his shoulder. "Turn your ear to me, Tony. I will not say it aloud."

He did as required. But she did not speak for a few moments.

He showed signs of impatience.

Then she gathered resolution, and whispered something into his ear; only a word or two, but he started, and turned in his saddle.

"What! Urith—is it true?"

"I must not ride with you more after to-night," she said, and her eyes fell.

Then he put his arm round her, and drew her to him, and kissed her on one cheek, then on the other, then on her mouth, and laughed aloud.

"Hold tight!" he said. Put both arms round me, both hands on my heart! Oh, Urith! Urith! What will my father say when he knows this? He will relent. He must."

CHAPTER XXXI.

FAMILY JARS.

"What is the meaning of the strange talk that is about concerning thee and Elizabeth Cleverdon?" asked Julian of her brother at breakfast next morning.

"Nay, that is putting on me more than I can do. I should be sorry to account for all the idle talk that blows and drifts about on the stream of conversation, like leaves of autumn on a trout pool."

"I heard it yesterday, and you certainly showed her great attention so long as you were at the dance."

"Did I show her more attention than you showed to one I do not name? Faith! if I had listened to and picked up the scraps of scandal cast about, I might have filled an

apron with what wanton words I heard concerning thee."

He looked hard at Julian, and their eyes met. She coloured, but shook off her embarrassment, and turned to her father and said, "The saying is that my brother is setting his cap to catch Bessie Cleverdon."

Mr. Crymes became grave, and looked at his son. He was a stern and Puritanical man, who had kept himself aloof from his children, never entering into their amusements, not concerning himself with what they did. Julian's fortune was assured to her, and his son would inherit something, the relics of the paternal estate, and what he had saved when managing for Julian.

"Is there anything in this, Anthony?" he asked. "On my honour, I am surprised."

"There is truth and there is falsehood in it," answered Fox, carelessly. "It has come to this, that as Julian cannot be Anthony Cleverdon's wife, it lies open to her to become his mother. Old Master Cleverdon is nothing loth, and, if she will accept him, she will have the opportunity of bringing the father to good terms with the son, for, from what I have seen, the happiness of Tony lies very near to my sister's

heart. If she declines the old man, I shall try my fortune with his daughter."

"This is absurd, Fox," said Julian, highly incensed.

"Absurd it may be—but the old gentleman has his head full of it, and has commissioned me to sound his way with you."

"Be silent," said Julian, very red, and very angry, "I do not believe one word of this; but that you are aiming at Bessie that I do believe, though when I asked her about it, she had no knowledge of anything of the kind."

"Before we proceed to consider my affairs, let us settle yours," said Fox. "Am I to tell Squire Cleverdon of Hall that you will not favour his suit, being already too deep gone in attachment to the son?"

"Silence to that slanderous tongue!" said Mr. Crymes, wrathfully. "Julian at one time was thought of in reference to young Tony Cleverdon, but he did not fancy her, but took Urith Malvine. From that moment the name of Tony Cleverdon, in connection with my daughter and your sister, is not to be employed in jest or earnest, by you or any other. Understand that."

"Then," said Fox, with his eye on his father, out of the corner, "let her keep herself out of folks' mouths, and not be like a rat I saw 'tother day, that ran into the jaws of my terrier, mistaking his open mouth for a run."

"What is he aiming at?" inquired Mr. Crymes, turning to his daughter. "I know he has a wicked tongue, but I cannot think he can speak without some occasion."

"There is nothing—that is to say——" Julian became confused. "Why may I not speak to—why not dance with an old, old friend?"

"I have no command to lay on you not to speak to, not to dance with an old friend," said her father, "but everything in moderation; take notice from your brother that evil eyes look out for occasion, therefore give none. If Ahab had no weak places in his armour, the bow drawn at a venture would not have sent an arrow to him with death at the point. No bluebottles are bred where carrion is not found."

Julian looked down abashed, then, with woman's craft, shifted the subject.

"It is nonsense that Tony speaks. I do not believe for an instant that Master

Cleverdon has any suit for me in his head—if he has, no marvel if folk talk, but God be wi' me, it will not be I who occasion it."

"What do you mean by this?" asked the father, now turning to his son. "Has my friend Cleverdon said aught to justify you?"

"My dear father, if you wish it, and Julian does not object, he will step from the position of good friend into son. He has cast an eye on Kilworthy, and as Kilworthy cannot be had without Julian, i' faith, he will take both."

"Let him dare to offer this to me!" exclaimed Julian, "and until he does, pass it over. I refuse to accept any message through such a go-between."

"It is no fault of mine," said Fox, "if the father thinks that some of the overspill of love and languishment for his son may redound to him. I do not see how Jule, if she desire to chastise her faithless lover for having despised her charms, can do so more effectually and more cuttingly than by taking his father. Then Tony Cleverdon is in her hands absolutely. She can reconcile his father to him or tear them apart for ever. She can bring him, if she will, to bite the

dust at her feet, to fawn at her knee, and to a woman such power is precious."

"That suffices," said Mr. Crymes; "you heard what was her answer. She will speak no more on this matter with you. If Cleverdon comes to me with the suit, I will know what reply to make: if he goes to Julian, she can answer him herself. Meanwhile do you keep silence thereon. I but half trust what thou sayest. Such fancies breed in thy perverse mind. Come now to the other matter. Is it true that you seek Elizabeth Cleverdon? For her sake I trust not, for I esteem her exceeding well as much as I reckon thee below the general level of good men. If I thought there was aught mendable in thee that could be shaped by the hands of a good wife, I would say God prosper thee. But I fear me thou art over-rotten at the heart to be ripened to any good, over-hard to be moulded to a vessel of honour."

"I do not see why you should think so ill of me, father," said Fox, sullenly; "unless it be that your ear has drunk in all the complaints Julian has poured out against me. What she says you accept, what I say you cast away. Then, I fancy, the time is

come when you will be glad to have me married and got rid of."

"You do seek marriage?"

"I seek to be away from those who flout and despise me, who cross me and mistrust me. At least Squire Cleverdon and I understand each other, and regard each other."

"Yes," broke in Julian; "for in each is the same yeast of sourness."

"Be silent, Julian," commanded her father. "Let me hear the boy out."

"What concern me the quirks and hints I hear concerning Jule?" pursued Fox, unable, in spite of his father, to contain himself from a stroke at his sister, "let them fly about thick as midges, they are naught to me—they do not sting me. Why, father, you should grudge me Bessie Cleverdon, I cannot see. If you respect her so highly—think so excellent well of her—I doubt that no other maid would so content you as a daughter-in-law as she."

"A better girl does not exist," answered Mr. Crymes. "I would desire her a better fate than to be united to thee."

"She is not comely, that is a fact," continued Fox, "but she will be the richest heiress in all the Tavistock district—between

here and Plymouth and Exeter. Now that Master Cleverdon has fallen out with his son, and that there is no riddance by Anthony of the wife with whom he has saddled himself, not to please his father, or himself—or Jule yonder——"

Mr. Crymes brought his fist down on the table.

"I will drive thee out of the room at another word against thy sister."

"Do you notice, father," exclaimed Julian, with flaming cheeks, "it is poor Bessie's money and the lands of Hall that he covets, and he seeks this by levering out of his place his best friend and old comrade."

"Did I lever him out of his place?" retorted Fox. "He did it himself, and never a little finger did I put to help in his upsettal."

"No, but you are ready to profit by his loss; ready, if you could, to get me as your confederate in fencing every inlet by which he might return to his father," said Julian, vehemently.

"Because one man is a fool, is that reason why his friend—as you choose to term me—should not be wise? Because one man throws away a diamond, why his

comrade should not pick it up and wear it on his finger?"

"The case is not the same. It is taking the jewel, and smiting the rightful owner in the face when he puts forth his hand to reclaim it, and that rightful owner—your friend."

"My friend!" exclaimed Fox, angrily. "Why should you call Anthony Cleverdon 'my friend?' Was it an act of a friend—a dear, considerate friend—to strike me in the eye and half blind me? Look!" Fox turned his left side towards his sister. "Do I not carry about with me a mark of friendship—a pledge to be redeemed? Trust me, I shall return that blow with usury some day, when the occasion comes."

"And you will employ poor Bessie as your lash wherewith you filip him in the face. You are a coward—a mean——"

"Silence!" commanded Mr. Crymes. "There is no grain of brotherly love between you two——"

"Not a grain," threw in Julian, hotly.

Fox bowed sarcastically.

"You observe, father," he said, "that here I am at a disadvantage, between a sister who spars at me and a father who treads me down."

"I do not tread on you save when you grovel in the dirt," answered Mr. Crymes, "in base and dishonest matters, and I do esteem this suit of Elizabeth Cleverdon as one such."

"Opinions vary. You make me willing to leave my home, though it be not mine, nor thine neither, father, but that of sister Julian, who stuffs my pillow with thorns and the seat of my chair with nettles. I would be away at any price, and if I can go to Hall and live there with Squire Cleverdon, I doubt not I shall be more content than I be here."

"You will live there?" said his father.

"No doubt. Master Cleverdon has ever had his daughter Elizabeth with him. He might have sent her packing, as he sent his own sister packing, when he needed her no more, and that would have been when Anthony brought home a wife to his taste. As he has not—if Julian still persists in declining to be my mother-in-law—why, I reckon that Bess will remain at Hall. A man must leave father and mother and cleave to his wife—so it will be scriptural, and that should content thee, father."

The old man drew forth his 'kerchief and wiped his face.

"I suppose, father," continued Fox, "that you will hardly let me go penniless out of the house? That would be a pretty comment on your professions. You must have saved something, and there is that little scrap of land still ours in Buckland——"

Mr. Crymes again wiped his face. He did not know what answer to make.

"Or, is the fashion set by Squire Cleverdon of cutting his son off without a shilling so infectious, that my father has taken it, and will follow suit, and sicken into the same green infirmity?"

"No," said Mr. Crymes, "I will do what is right; but you spring this on me, I am taken aback——"

"I did not spring it on you. That is one of the many kindnesses I have received from Jule."

"I do not know what to say. You must give me time to consider. This journey to London has cost me a considerable sum of money."

"There comes the usual excuse for shirking out of a money obligation which cannot be enforced by law. Say on, father—the times have been bad, the hay was

black with rain, the corn did not kern well, the mottled cow dropped her calf, the tenants have not paid, and so my poor boy gets nothing but advice in bushels and exhortations in yards."

"Having insulted your sister, you now throw your jibes at me. That is not encouraging me to deal handsomely towards you."

"I did not think, father, that you needed to be coaxed and caressed to do an act of justice."

"I do not ask that of thee, but I must consider. It ill pleases me that you should have thought of Bessie Cleverdon."

"If I had chosen some worthless wench without a penny to bless herself withall, you would have shaken the head and broken the staff over me. Now that I have chosen one who is in all ways unexceptional, who is a wealthy heiress of irreproachable manners of life, the favourite of everybody, a dutiful daughter, it is all the same—you disapprove. Is there aught I could do—any change I could make—that would give thee pleasure?"

"None—till I saw there was amendment in thyself."

"If I can give satisfaction in no way to thee, father, I may assuredly make choice for myself. Bess may not be beautiful, but she pleases me—she has what is better than beauty, all Hall estate on her back. It will be to your advantage and to that of Jule that I should take her—you will thus be rid of me, who content neither of you, simply because my tongue has a point to it, and I do not suffer it to lie by and be blunted."

Then Julian laughed out—

"What avails all this reckoning and debating over a matter that cannot be settled till the main person concerned has been consulted? Bessie, I am very sure, has not the faintest waft of a notion that such schemes are being spun about her, or had not till I spoke with her yestreen. She will never take thee, Fox. Bessie has a good heart and a shrewd understanding, and neither will suffer her to take thee."

"You think not?" asked Fox, superciliously.

"I am sure she will not," answered Julian.

"We shall see," said Fox. "She is not as was her brother, one to fly in the face of a father. He has set his mind to it, and if

Julian will not have him, then he will yet have an Anthony Cleverdon to sit on his seat, and reign in his stead, when he has been gathered to his old yeoman fathers."

"How mean you?"

"Why thus—I am Anthony. I was thus christened. And if I take Bess, I will throw aside my surname of Crymes, which brings me little—and take that of my father-in-law. So he will have an Anthony Cleverdon to carry on the name, and I—" his face assumed a malevolent expression, "I shall have spoiled for ever his own son's chances. It shall be down in black-and-white, and bound as fast as I can bind him. See if I cannot manage for myself."

He stood up, took his hat, and set it jauntily on his head, then, at the door turned, and with a mocking laugh, said:

"There, sister Jule! Is not that a slap in the face for Anthony, that will make his cheek tingle?"

He left the room.

Mr. Crymes laid his brow in his hand, and his elbow on the table.

"'Fore heaven!" he sighed, "I curse the day that gave me such a son."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MORE JARS.

A DRIZZLING rainy day. A day on which nothing could be seen but a wavering veil of minute dust of water. A drizzle that was wetting, and which penetrated everywhere. The air was warm, laden with moisture, oppressive and depressing. From a window could be seen nothing beyond a hedge. Trees seemed to be bunches of cotton wool; the drizzle crawled or was drawn along by a damp wind over the grass, along the hedge, beading every blade and twig with the minutest drops of moisture. The shrubs, the plants stooped, unable to support the burden deposited on them, and shot the impalpable waterdust down on the soil in articulate drops.

Although the drizzle was excluded by roof

and walls from the house, the moisture-charged atmosphere could not be shut out, and it made the interior only less wretched than outside the house. The banisters, the jambs of the door, the iron locks were bedewed, and the hand that touched them left a smear and came off clogged with water. The slates of the floor turned black, and stood with drops, as though the rain had splashed over them. Wherever there was a stone in the wall of a slatey or impervious nature, it declared itself by condensing moisture, sweating through plaster and whitewash, and sending tears trickling down the walls. The fireirons became suddenly tarnished and rusty. The salt in the sellar and salt-box was sodden, and dripped brine upon the floor, as did the hams and sides of bacon hung up in the kitchen. The table-linen and that for the beds adhered to the fingers when touched.

Anthony stood at the window in the hall looking out, then he went to the fire; then took down a gun from over the mantel-shelf and looked at the lock and barrel; stood it in the corner of the fire, and resolved by and by to clean it. Then he went to the window again, and wrote his initials on the

window-pane, or tried to do so, and failed, for the condensation of moisture was not inside but without, on the glass.

He had nothing to occupy him; no work could be done on the farm, and employment or amusement lacked in the house.

Where was Urith? She might come and talk to and entertain him.

What is the good of a wife, unless she sets herself to make home agreeable to her husband, when he is unable to go out-of-doors?

Where was Solomon Gibbs? He might have talked, fiddled, and sung, though, indeed, Anthony had no relish just then for music, and he knew pretty well all the topics on which Uncle Sol had aught to say. His anecdotes had often been retailed, and Anthony loathed them. He knew when Sol was preparing to tell one, he knew which he was about to produce, he was acquainted with every word he would use in telling his tale.

Anthony had grown irritable of late with Sol, and had brushed him rudely when he began to repeat some hacknied anecdote. On such a day as this, however, even Uncle Sol were better than no one.

At length, Anthony, impatient and out of humour, went upstairs, and called Urith. She answered him faintly from a distance.

"Where are you hidden? What are you about?" he called.

"In the lumber-room," she replied.

He followed the direction of her voice, and came to a sort of garret full of every kind of discarded article of domestic use, old crocks that had lost a leg, broken-backed chairs, a dismantled clock, corroded rush-lights, bottles that were cracked, a chest of drawers which had lost half the brass-handles by which the drawers could be pulled out.

In the obscurity, dishevelled, covered with dust, and warm with her exertions, stood Urith. She put her hand to her face, and pushed her strayed hair from her eyes.

"I want thy help, Tony," she said. "I have been searching, and at length I have found it. But I cannot carry it forth myself."

"Found what?"

"Oh—how can you ask? Do you not see what it is?"

It was an old, dusty, cobweb-covered, wooden-cradle.

"What do you want, Urith, with this wretched bit of rummage?"

"What do I want it for? Oh—Tony, of course you know. It is true I shall not need it immediately—not for some months, but I shall like to have it forth, and clean it well, and polish its sides, and fit it up with little mattress and pillows, and whatsoever it need, before the time come when it is required to be put in use."

"I will not have this wretched old cradle," said Anthony. "It is not meet for my son—the heir to Hall and Willsworthy."

"You are reckoning too soon—" laughed Urith. "Perhaps you may have a daughter, not a son."

"A daughter! I do not want a maid; no—I shall never forgive you, if it be not a boy. Urith! My—everything depends on that. When there is a new Anthony Cleverdon, my father can hold out in his obstinacy no longer. He must give way. An Anthony Cleverdon of Willsworthy, and *not* of Hall! It would go against all his pride, against his most cherished ambition. It cannot, it shall not be. Urith, a boy it must be, and what is more, he shall not lie in that dusty, cobweb-clad pig-trough. It would not become him."

"But Tony," laughed Urith, "it was mine,

I was rocked in that. It was not so bad that I could not sleep therein."

"Oh you!" he spoke disparagingly in tone. "You were heiress of Willsworthy only, but my young Anthony will be something much different from that."

"I want my child to lie in the same crib in which I was rocked. It will be a pleasure to me."

"I will not have it. This is too mean."

"What does it signify?"

"If it does not signify, then let me go and buy a new cradle."

"No," said Urith. "No—there I lay when a poor little feeble creature; and there, in the same, it shall lie when it comes."

"I will go into Peter Tavy to the carpenter, and order a new cradle."

"I will not use it if you do. We have not the money to waste on luxuries. A child will sleep as well in this as in a painted cradle."

All at once, Anthony flushed to the roots of his hair. A thought had struck him, that if he bought a new cradle he must do so with his wife's money. He had nothing of his own. He was her pensioner. There stood at his side an old rusty bar of iron;

in his anger and disgust he grasped this, raised it, and brought it down on the cradle, breaking down its side.

"Anthony!" exclaimed Urith. "Anthony! you would not have done that had any love, any respect remained in your heart for me. You would have loved the little crib in which I was laid, if you loved me."

He did not answer her. Ashamed at his own conduct, embittered at her opposition to his wishes, discontented with his lot, he left the garret and descended the stairs.

On reaching the hall, he found Solomon Gibbs there: he had been out in the rain, and had come in very wet. His face was red and moist, proclaiming that he had been drinking, but he was not intoxicated, only hilarious. He had cast his hat on the table, a broad-brimmed felt hat that had absorbed the rain like a sponge, and was now giving it forth in a stream that made a puddle on the table and ran over the side, dripped on to a bench, and having formed a slop there fell again to the floor, there producing another pool. The water ran off Uncle Sol's dress and oozed from his boots that were rent, and had admitted water within,

which now spirited forth from the gaps at every step. Solomon had taken down a quarter-staff from the wall, and was making passes, wards, and blows in the air at an imaginary opponent, and, as he delivered his strokes, he trilled forth snatches of song:

> I'm a hearty good fellow, as most men opine,

Then whacked from right to left—

> So fill up your bumpers, and pass round the wine,
> Singing, Tol-de-rol-lol-de-rol.

He fell to the ward.

"Come on, Tony lad! 'Tis cursed moist weather, and no fun out of doors. I've been to the Hare and Hounds, but no one there, and not even I can drink when there be no comrades with whom to change a word. Come Tony, take a stick and let us play together, perhaps it will dry me, for I am damp, uncommon damp."

"Take your hat off the table," said Anthony, in ill-humour. He was accustomed to order and cleanliness in his father's house, and the ramshackle ways of Willsworthy displeased him; Uncle Sol was a prince of offenders in disordering and be-

fouling everything. "Take your hat off. We shall have the board spread shortly, and how can we eat off it when it is slopped over by the drainage of your dirty beaver?"

"Nay, Tony, boy; let it lie. See—here I be. I will stand on the defence, and you take t'other stick; and, if you beat me off, you shall remove my hat; but, if I remain master, you shall pull off my boots. Can't do it myself, by heaven, they be so sodden with water."

"I will make you both remove your hat and kick off your own boots," said Anthony, angrily. "Dost' think because I have married the niece that I am abased to be the uncle's serving-man? 'Fore heaven, I'll teach thee the contrary."

He went to the wall, took down a stick, and attacked Solomon Gibbs with violence.

Uncle Sol, for all the liquor he had drunk, was sober enough to be able to parry his blows, though handicapped by his drenched garments, which weighed on his shoulders and impeded rapid movement.

Anthony was not an accomplished quarter-staff-player: he had not a quick eye, and he had never possessed that application to sports, which would render him a master in

any. Satisfied if he did fairly well, and was matched with inferiors, who either could not or would not defeat him, he had now small chance against the old man, who had been a skilful player in his youth—who, indeed, had stuck to his sports when he ought to have held to his studies.

The old man held the staff between his hands over his head jauntily—carelessly, it seemed—but with perfect assurance; whereas Anthony struck about at random, and rarely touched his antagonist. Anthony was in a bad temper—he faced the window; whereas Uncle Sol stood with his back to the light, and to the table, defending his soaked hat. Anthony was the assailant; whereas Sol remained on the defensive, with an amused expression in his glossy face, and giving vent at intervals to snatches of melody—showing his unconcern, and heightening his opponent's irritability, and causing him every moment to lose more control over his hand and stick.

Once Anthony struck Uncle Sol on the side, and the thud would have showed how dead with wet the old man's coat was, even had not water squirted over the stick at the blow.

"Well done, Tony! One for thee!" Then Mr. Gibbs brought his staff down with a sweep, and cut Anthony on the left shoulder.

The sting and numbness roused Anthony's ire, and he made a furious attack on his antagonist, which was received with perfect equanimity and the hardly-interrupted strain of—

> I sing of champions bold,
> That wrestled—not for gold.

With ease, and without discontinuing his song, Sol caught a blow levelled at his skull, dealt with such force that Tony's hand was jarred by it.

> And all the cry
> Was Will Trefry,
> That he would win the day.
> So Will Trefry, huzzah!
> The ladies clap their hands and cry—
> Trefry! Trefry, huzzah!

Down came Sol's stick on his antagonist's right shoulder.

"There, there! You are no match for me," laughed the old man. "Will you give over—and pull off my boots?"

"Never!" shouted Anthony, and struck at him again, again ineffectually.

"Look out Tony! save your head!"

The old man by a dexterous backhanded blow struck up Anthony's staff, and with a light stroke he touched his ear. He had no intention to hurt him, he might have cut open his head had he willed; but he never lost his good-humour, never took full advantage of the opportunities given him by the maladroitness of his antagonist.

It was exasperating to the young man to be thus played with, trifled with by a man whom he despised, but who he felt was, at all events at quarter-staff, his master.

"Hah!" shouted Anthony, triumphantly. His stick had caught in Sol's wig, and had whisked it off his skull, but instantly the old man with a sweep of his staff smote his stick from the hand of Anthony, leaving him totally disarmed.

"There, boy, there! Acknowledge thyself vanquished."

Then the old fellow threw himself down on the bench, with his back to the table.

"Come, lad, pull off my boots."

"I will not," said Anthony, savagely, "you had unfair odds. You stood with your back to the window."

"I was guarding my hat. Leave it

where it lies, dribble, dribble—drip, and take my place on the floor, and try another bout, if thou wilt. Come on, I am ready for thee."

Mr. Solomon Gibbs stood up, resumed his quarter-staff, and stepped into the midst of the hall. Anthony with his face on fire with annoyance and anger, stooped for his own weapon, and then took the place with the table behind him, where previously Mr. Gibbs had stood.

"Ready!" called Sol. "Come along! so be I."

Another bout, staves whirling in the air, feet dancing forward, backward, to this side, then to that.

Reports as of pistols, when the sticks met.

Anthony was no match for the old gentleman even now that he had the advantage of the light. Sol was without his wig, he had not resumed it, and his shaven pate exhibited many a scar, the mark of former encounters in which he had got the worst, but in which also he had acquired his skill.

"My foot slipped!" said Anthony, as, having dealt an ineffectual blow from which Uncle Sol drew back, Anthony went forward

to his knee, exposing himself completely to the mercy of his antagonist. "It is that cursed wet you have brought in—not fair."

"Choose a dry spot," said Sol.

"You have puddled the whole floor," answered the young man.

"Then it is equal for both of us. I have given thee many advantages, boy."

"I want none. I will have none."

His eye was on the old man's bald head; the sting of the blows he had received had exasperated him past consideration of what was due to an aged man, the uncle of his wife. The blows had numbed in him every sense save anger. He longed to be able to cut open that smooth round skull, and so revenge his humiliations and relieve his ill-humour. But he could not reach that glossy pate, not smite which way he would, so dexterous was the ward of Uncle Sol, so ready was his eye, and quick his arm in responding to his eye.

Not an advantage of any kind could he get over his adversary; he rained his blows fast, in the fury of his disappointment, hoping to beat down the guard by mere weight of blows; and Uncle Sol saw that Tony was blinded with wrath and had lost

all sense of play, having passed into angry earnest. Then he twirled the stick from Anthony's hand once more, so that it flew to the ceiling, struck that, and fell by the hearth.

Mr. Gibbs laughed. "Mine again, Tony, boy!" He cast himself into the settle by the fire, stretched forth his legs, and said, "Come, pull off my boots."

Anthony stood lowering at him, panting and hot.

> He strip't him to the waist,
> He boldly Trefry faced,
> I'll let him know
> That I can throw
> As well as he to-day!
> So little Jan, huzzah!
> And some said so—but others, No,
> Trefry, Trefry, huzzah!

Sol sang lustily, with his hands in his pockets and his legs extended.

"Come, lad, down on thy knees, and off with my boots."

Anthony did stoop, he went on one knee, not on both, and not to pull off the old man's boots, but to pick up his quarter-staff, whirl it round his head, and level a blow at the head of the undefended Uncle Sol; the

blow would have fallen, had not Urith, who had entered the room at that moment, sprung forward, and caught it in her hand.

"Coward!" she exclaimed, "Coward!—my uncle! an old man! I hate you. Would God I had never seen you!"

He had hurt her hand, he saw it, for she caught it to her bosom, then put it to her mouth, but her eyes glared at him over her hand like white lightning.

"A scurvy trick, lad—did not think thee capable of it," said Uncle Sol. "Has he hurt thee child?"

He stood up.

Anthony flung the quarter-staff from him with an oath, put his hand to his brow, stood for a minute confronting Urith, looking into her fiery eyes, without exculpation, without a word. Then he turned, took up Uncle Sol's hat, without observing that it was not his own, flung it on his head, and went forth.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

INTO TEMPTATION.

Never is man so inflamed with anger, so overflowing with gall against others, as when he is conscious that he has laid himself open to animadversion. Anthony was bitter at heart against his wife and against her uncle, because he was aware, without being ready to acknowledge it, that he had acted ill towards both.

Why should not Urith have yielded at once to his wishes about the cradle? How obtuse to all delicate and elevated feeling she was to think that such a dusty, dingy, worm-eaten crib would suffice for his son, the representative of the house of Cleverdon—the child who was to be the means of reconciliation between himself and his father—the heir of Hall, who would open to him

again the paternal mansion, and enable him to return there and escape from Willsworthy, a place becoming daily more distasteful, and likely to become wholly insupportable! That he had seen the cradle under disadvantage, in its abandoned, forgotten condition, and that it could be made to look well when a little feminine skill and taste had been expended on it, did not occur to him.

Moreover, his wife had no right to resist his wishes. He knew the world better than she—he knew what befitted one of the station his child would assume better than she. What might do for an heir to Willsworthy would be indecent for the heir to Hall—what might have suited a girl was not adapted to a boy. A wife should not question, but submit; the wish of her husband ought to be paramount to her, and she should understand that her husband in requiring a thing acted on his right as master, and that her place was to bow to his requisition. The old sore against his father that had partially skinned over broke out again, festering and hot. He was angry against his father, as he was against Urith. He was angry also with Mr. Gibbs for having proved a better man than himself at quarter-

staff. Of old, Anthony had shown himself a tolerable wrestler, runner, quarter-staff-player, thrower of quoits, player at bowls, among the young men of his acquaintance, and he had supposed himself a match for any one. Now he was easily disarmed and defeated by a half-tipsy old loafer, who had done no good to himself or any one in his life.

He had gone down in public estimation since his marriage—he who had been cock of the walk. And now he was not even esteemed in his own house; resisted by his wife, who set at naught his wishes, played with and beaten by that sot—her uncle.

There was no one who really admired and looked up to him any longer, except Julian Crymes.

He had wandered forth in the wet, without a purpose, solely with the desire to be away from the house where he had met with annoyance, where he had played—but this he would not admit, though he felt it—so poor a figure. He took his way to Peter Tavy, and went into the little inn of the Hare and Hounds at Cudlip Town, the first hamlet he reached.

No one was there. Uncle Sol had sat

there, and tippled and smoked; but had finally wearied of the solitariness, and had gone away. Now Anthony sat down where he had been, and was glad to find no one there, for in his present humour he was disinclined for company. The landlord came to him and took his order for *aqua vitæ*, brought it, and seated himself on a stool near him. But Anthony would not speak, or only answered his questions shortly, so as to let the man understand that his society was not desired. He took the hint, rose, and left the young man to his own thoughts.

Anthony put his head in his hand, and looked sullenly at the table. Many thoughts troubled him. Here he had sat on that eventful night after his first meeting and association with Urith on the moor. Here he had sat, with his heart on fire from her eyes, smouldering with love—just as an optic-glass kindles tinder. Here he had drunk, and, to show his courage, had gone forth to the churchyard and had broken down her father's head-post. He had brought it to this house, thrown it on this table—there! he doubted not, was the dint made by it when it struck the board.

How long was it since that night? Only a little over a twelvemonth. Did Urith's eyes burn his heart now? There was a fire in them occasionally, but it did not make his heart flame with love, but with anger. Formerly he was the well-to-do Anthony Cleverdon of Hall, with money in his pockets, able to take his pleasure, whatever it cost him. Now he had to reckon whether he could afford a glass before he treated himself to one, was warned against purchasing a new cradle as a needless expense, a bit of unpardonable extravagance.

He tossed off his glass, and signed for it to be refilled.

Then he thought of his father, of his rebellion against him, and he asked whether any good had come to him by that revolt. He, himself, was like to be a father shortly. Would his son ever set him at defiance, as he had defied his father? He wondered what his father was thinking of him; whether he knew how straitened his circumstances were, how clouded his happiness was, how he regretted the unretraceable step he had taken, how he was weary of Willsworthy, and how he hungered to hear of and to see Hall once

more. There was little real conscious love of his father in his heart. He did not regret the breach for his father's sake, think of the desolation of the old man, with his broken hopes, his disappointed ambitions; he saw things only as they affected himself; he was himself the pivot about which all his meditations turned, and he condoled with, lamented over himself as the worst-used of men, the man most buffeted by misfortune.

Anthony kicked the legs of the table impatiently. The host looked at him and smirked. He had his own opinion as to how matters stood with Anthony. He knew well enough that the young man was unlike Mr. Gibbs, was no toper; he had rarely stepped within his doors since his marriage. As the host observed him, he chuckled to himself and said, "That fellow will come often here now. He has a worm at the heart, and that worm only ceases to gnaw when given *aqua vitæ* or punch."

What if the old Squire were to remain obdurate to the end? What if he did not yield to the glad news that he was grandfather to a new Anthony Cleverdon? Anthony's heart turned sick at the thought.

His son to be condemned to a toilful life at Willsworthy! But what if Urith should at some future time be given a daughter, then her estate would pass away from the young Anthony, and the representative of the Cleverdons would be adrift in the land without an acre, with hardly a coin—and Hall would be held by an alien.

He stamped with rage.

His father was possessed with madness; the whole blame fell on his father. Why was the old grudge against Richard Malvine to envenom the life of the son and grandchildren of the Squire? By the course he took the Squire was not hurting the man whom he hated, who was in his grave and insensible to injury, but his own living direct descendants! He was stabbing at his own family, in his insensate malice. Anthony thought over his quarrel with the old man, and he regretted that he had not spoken plainer, given his father sharper thrusts than he had—that he had not dipped his words in pitch, and thrown them blazing into his father's face.

His cheeks were burning; he clenched his fists and ground his teeth, and then bowed his hot brow upon his clenched

hands. No doubt his father would hear how absurdly Urith had danced at the Cake's, and would laugh over it. He held up his head and looked round him, thinking he heard the cackle of his father, so vividly did his imagination portray the scene. No one was in the room save the taverner; but Anthony caught his eye fixed on him, and he turned impatiently away.

Urith was not—there was no blinking the matter—a wife suitable to him. He compared her with his sister. Bessie was sweet, gentle, and with all her amiability, dignified; Urith was rough, headstrong, and sullen. She was uncouth, unyielding—did not understand what were the tastes and requirements of a man brought up on a higher plane of refinement. He was weary of her lowering brow, of her silence, her dark eyes with a sombre, smouldering fire in them. He wondered how he could ever have admired her! He never would feel content with her. He had sacrificed for her the most splendid prospects that any man had, and she did not appreciate the sacrifice, and bow down before him and worship him for it.

He knocked over his glass and broke it.

By heaven! He wished he had never married Urith.

Anthony stood up, and threw down some coin to pay for his brandy and for the broken glass. He had knocked over the glass in the gesture and start of disgust, when he had wished himself unmarried, and now—he must pay for the glass with money that came to him from Urith. He knew this, it made him writhe, but he quickly deadened the spasm by the consideration that for every groat he had of his wife, he had given up a guinea. She was in debt to him, and the ridiculous little sums placed at his disposal were but an inadequate acknowledgment of the vast indebtedness under which she lay.

He stood for a few minutes in the rain irresolute, uncertain in which direction to turn. Home?—To Willsworthy? To the reproaches of Urith, to the tedious jests and drawled-out songs of Mr. Gibbs? To the sight of Urith ostentatiously holding her hand in a sling to let him know that he had hurt her, when she intercepted the blow aimed at her uncle?

"Pshaw!" said Anthony. "She is not hurt, she cannot be hurt. She caught the

stick in her palm. It stung her, no doubt, but will pass. But what an outcry and fuss will be made over it."

Yet his heart reproached him for these complaints. He knew that it was not the way with Urith to make an outcry and a fuss. If he had hurt her, she would disguise the fact. Anyhow, he resolved not to go back to Willsworthy.

Should he go on to Peter Tavy, and visit his Cousin Luke?

No—he had no desire for the society of a parson. Luke had married him to Urith; Luke was in part to blame for his present condition of dissatisfaction. Luke might surely, if he had poked about in his books, have discovered some canonical reason why the marriage could not have taken place, at least as early as it did. Then—with delay—his love might have abated, his head would have become cooler, he would have been better able to balance loss and gain.

"Loss and gain!" scoffed Anthony, "all loss and no gain!"

Luke would surmise that all was not right, he was keen-sighted—he had already had the impertinence to give an oblique admonition to Anthony to be tender and

forbearing to his wife. If he went to him now, Luke would nail him, and hammer remonstrances into him.

By heaven! no—he wanted no sermons preached to him on week-days.

He walked to the door of Farmer Cudlip. The Cudlips had been on that estate much as the Cleverdons had been at Hall, for centuries, but the Cudlips had owned their own land, as yeomen, whereas the Cleverdons had been tenant-farmers. Now the Cleverdons had taken a vast stride up the ladder, whereas the Cudlips, who had given their name to the hamlet, had remained stationary. The Cudlips, though only yeomen, were greatly respected. Some of the gentle families were of mushroom growth compared with them. It was surmised that the Cudlips had originally been Cutcliffs, and that this yeoman family had issued from the ancient stock of Cutcliffe of Damage in North Devon, and had gone forth like a scriptural patriarch and made itself a settlement on the verge of the moor, and called the land after its own name, but there was no evidence to prove this. It was at one time a conjecture of a Rector of Peter Tavy, who mentioned

it to the Cudlip then at Cudlip Town, who shrugged his shoulders and said, "It might be for aught he knew." In the next generation the descent was talked of as all but certain, in the third it was a well-established family tradition.

Anthony stood in the doorway of the old ancestral farm. He had knocked, but received no answer; no one had come to the door in response. He knew or guessed the reason, for overhead he heard Mistress Cudlip putting the youngest child to bed; he had heard the little voice of the child raised in song, chanting its evening hymn:

> Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
> Bless the bed that I lie on.
> Four angels to my bed,
> Two to bottom, two to head;
> Two to hear me when I pray,
> Two to bear my soul away.

Probably Farmer Cudlip was not within. Had he been, the knock of Anthony would have been responded to by a loud and hearty call to come in.

Anthony did not repeat the knock. It was of no use his entering that house if the

master were out; he did not want to pass words with women folk. But he halted where he was in order to make up his mind whither he should go. He craved for—not exactly flattery, but something of that adulation which had been lavished on him by all alike—old and young, men and maids—when he was Anthony Cleverdon of Hall, and which had been denied him since he had become Anthony Cleverdon of Willsworthy.

Under the humiliation he had received in his own house, under the sense of disgrace which he had brought on himself, first by his anger over the cradle, and his breaking it down with a blow of an iron bar; then, by his hand raised over an old man, defenceless, he felt a real need for adulation. He could not hold up his head, recover his moral elasticity till he had encountered some one who did not flaunt and beat him down. Fox—should he go and see Fox at Kilworthy? Fox was his friend; Fox had a sharp tongue and could say cutting things that would make him laugh, would shake the moths out of his fretted brain. Yes, he would go to Kilworthy and see Fox.

As he formed this resolution he was

conscious that he was false to himself. He did not want to see Fox. Fox would not look up to him with eyes full of loving devotion. Fox's colour would not flash to the cheek when he entered. Fox's pulses would not bound when his step was heard on the gravel. Fox would not in word encourage him to think well of himself, to esteem himself again as the old cock of the walk in plumage, instead of a wretched draggled fowl. No—he did not want to see Fox, but Fox's sister. He would go to Kilworthy to see, to hear Julian Crymes, but he repeated to himself—"I must have a talk with Fox."

Then he heard the little child's voice upstairs repeating the Prayer of Prayers after its mother.

"Forgive us our trespasses," said Mistress Cudlip.

"Tespusses," said the child.

"As we forgive them that trespass against us."

"As we 'give them——" a pause. The mother assisted the little one, and it completed the sentence.

"And lead us not into temptation."

"And lead us not——"

Anthony drew his cloak closer about him, shook the water from Solomon's hat, that he wore, and set it again on his head.

"Into temptation," said the mother.

"Lead us not into temptation," repeated the child. Anthony bent his head, and went out into the rain, went heedless of the warning that hammered at his heart, went wilfully—into temptation.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A COLD WOOING.

"GET yourself ready," ordered Squire Cleverdon, looking at Bessie across the table. "Your aunt is unwell, and I have sent word that we would come and see her. A wet day, and nothing better to be done, so we can find out what is the matter with her."

"Certainly, father," answered Elizabeth, with alacrity. "I hope nothing serious is the matter with her?"

"Oh, serious, no."

The manner of the Squire was never gracious to his daughter; always imperious, but this day there was a peculiarity in it that struck her. There was, she felt instinctively, something in the background.

"What is it, father? I pray you tell me. She is not in any danger?"

"Oh, danger? No." A twitching of his cheeks marked inner uneasiness.

Bessie looked anxiously at him. "I am sure, father, you are hiding something from me."

"Go at once and get ready! Do not stop chattering here like a parrot," he roared forth, and Bessie fled.

Elizabeth had no anxiety over the weather. That was not the day of umbrellas, but then, neither was it the day of fine bonnets. The skirt was worn short, and did not trail in and collect the mud. A woman pinned up her gown, or looped it at the girdle, exposing a bright-coloured petticoat, and below that her ankles, and there were many inches between the mud and the petticoat. A thick serge mantle covered gown and petticoat; it was provided with a hood that was drawn over the head, and bright eyes looked out of the hood and laughed at the rain and cold.

We sometimes wonder now how the world got on before the introduction of the umbrella. Very well. It was dryer, warmer, better protected in former days. It is only since the invention and expansion of the parapluie, that that marvel of

millinery, the nineteenth-century bonnet, piled up of feathers and flowers, and bead and lace, became possible. The umbrella has been a bell-shade under which it has grown.

Mr. Cleverdon was not communicative during the ride to Tavistock. Now and then he growled forth a curse on the weather, but said nothing against Magdalen. This surprised his daughter, who was accustomed to hear him grumble at his sister if she occasioned him any inconvenience; but she charitably set it down to real concern for Magdalen, and this increased her fear that more was the matter with her aunt than her father chose to admit.

Aunt Magdalen really was indisposed; but the indisposition was partly, if not chiefly, due to her distress of mind about her niece. She knew that her brother had resolved to act upon her own advice to marry Bess to young Crymes, and that he expected his sister to help him to overcome any opposition that might be encountered from Bessie. Poor Elizabeth had as little suspicion, as she accompanied her father to Tavistock, that he was about to sacrifice her, as had Isaac when he ascended Moriah at the side of Abraham.

When Mr. Cleverdon and Bessie arrived at the house of Miss Magdalen, near the Abbey Bridge, they observed a man's hat and cloak hung up in the hall.

"Oh!" exclaimed Elizabeth, "the doctor is here! I am sure my aunt is really very ill."

At the same moment the side door opened, and the old lady appeared, and caught her niece in her arms.

"He is here," said Magdalen—"arrived only a minute before you."

"Who is here?" asked Bessie. "What do you mean?"

"Come aside with me into my snuggery," said her aunt. "I have a word with you before I speak with your father, and in the parlour he will find Anthony."

"Anthony! My brother!" with a joyful flash from Bessie; and she flung her arms round her aunt. "Oh, you dear—you good Aunt Magdalen! You have——"

"Have done with this folly," said the Squire, angrily. "Are you still such a fool as to think that when I say a thing I shall change about? No—your brother is not in there, but your bridegroom."

Miss Cleverdon put up her hand entreat-

ingly to stop her brother, and hastily brought her niece into the adjoining room and shut the door.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Bessie, with some composure. She had now a suspicion that the visit concerned herself, and not her aunt.

"My dear," said Magdalen, "do seat yourself—no, not in that chair; it is hard, and there is something wrong with the back—the bar comes exactly where it ought not, and hurts the spine—at least, I find it so. I never sit in it myself, never. Take that seat by the fireplace. I am so sorry there is nothing burning on the hearth, but, on my word, I did not expect to have you in here. I thought I might have spoken a word with you in the parlour before he came, or—but, bless my heart, Bess! I am so distracted I hardly know what I thought."

Bessie shook down her skirt over her dark blue petticoat, and seated herself where her aunt desired, then laid her hands in her lap, and looked steadily at Miss Cleverdon.

"You are not ill, then?" she said.

"Oh, my dear, ill! I have not slept a

wink, nor had a stomach for aught. I should think I was indeed ill, but all about you. You must remember that the commandment with promise is that which refers to the submission of a child to the parent; but, Lord! Bess, I would not have you forced against your wishes. Your father's mind is made up, and he has met with a sore disappointment in the case of Anthony. I do think it will be a comfort to him, and heal over that trouble somewhat, if he finds you more pliant than was Anthony. But, Lord! Bess, nothing, I trust, hinders you—no previous attachment. Lord! I did at one time think that your heart was gone a hankering after Luke."

Bessie, who had become very pale, flushed, and said, "I entreat thee, aunt, not to have any fancies concerning me. I never gave thee grounds for any such opinion."

"I know that, I know that, child. But, Lord! an old woman like me must have her thoughts about those she loves and wishes well for."

"Aunt," said Bessie, "I think I can understand that my father desires to have me married, and has asked you to see me

thereon. I have had some notions thereupon myself, but I would gladly hear from you whom he has fixed on, though, indeed, I think I can guess."

"It is Fox," answered Miss Cleverdon, and looked down on the floor, and arranged her stool, which was slipping from under her feet. "There, there, I have told thee; thy father put it on me. And I can only say to thee that which thou knowest well thyself. He belongs to an ancient family, once well estated, but now sadly come down; nevertheless, there is something of the old patrimony remaining. He is thy father's friend's son; and as it has come about that the families that were to be united by my nephew have not been thus joined, it is not wonderful that your father would see them clipped together by thee."

"I cannot indeed take Fox," said Bessie, gravely.

"Well—well—the final choosing must be with thee, wench. All that thy father can do is to say that he desires it, and all I can do is to support him. God forbid that we should constrain thee unwilling, and yet a blessing does rain down from above the clouds on the heads of such children as be

obedient. Now look to Anthony, and see if he be happy, having gone against his father's wishes."

"Is he unhappy?" asked Bessie.

"I do not think him the same at all. He is restless, and his mood has lost all brightness. I have not seen much of him, but what I have seen has made me uneasy concerning him, and what Fox tells me still further disconcerts me."

"I may not go to Willsworthy. I may not see my brother nor Urith—except by very chance I meet them," said Bessie, heaving a sigh, and her eyes filling. "My father seems no nearer forgiving than he was at first."

"I do not think that aught will move him to forgiveness save, perchance, the finding of ready obedience in thee."

"I cannot—indeed I cannot, in this," said Bess.

"Lord! I would not counsel thee against thy happiness," pursued Magdalen. "But see how ill it has worked with Anthony. He followed his own will, and went against the commandment of his father, and it eats as a canker into his heart, I can see that, now if thou——"

Then the door was thrown open, and the Squire appeared in it, with Fox behind his back in the passage.

"Sister," said old Cleverdon, "enough time has been spent over preparing Bess for what must be. As you have not brought her unto us, to the parlour, we've come in here to you. Come in, Tony! Come in! Look at her—there she sits; kiss her, lad! She is thine!"

But Fox did not offer to do what was required of him; Bessie started and drew back, fearing lest he should, but was at once reassured by his deprecatory look and uplifted hand.

"May I enter?" asked Fox.

"Come in, boy, come in!" said the old man, answering for his sister, as though the house were his own; and his own it might be considered, for it was paid for and furnished out of Hall; the maintenance of Miss Cleverdon fell on him and his estate.

"Come!" said the Squire, roughly, "shut the door behind you, boy. Go over beside her. Take her hand. Hold out yours, Bess. Do y' hear? It is all settled between us."

Fox entered the room, fastened the door,

and remained fumbling at the lock, with his face to it, affecting great diffidence. Mr. Cleverdon took him by the arm and thrust him away, and pointed imperiously to where Bess sat, near the fireplace, on which burnt no spark; her hands lay in her lap folded, and her eyes on the hearth. The window was behind her. The little room was panelled with dark oak that was polished. There were no pictures, no ornaments on the wall—only one oval pastille over the mantelshelf of Magdalen when she was a girl. The colour had faded from this, the pink gone wholly—it was a poor bleached picture of a plain maiden; and now beneath it sat one as blanched, for all the colour had gone out of Bessie's face, and she had assumed the same stiff attitude that her aunt had maintained when drawn by the artist.

Fox, with apparent reluctance, went over to the fireplace; Elizabeth looked at her father with great drops forming on her brow, as though the damp of the atmosphere condensed on that surface of white alabaster.

"Give him your hand. Are you deaf?"

Elizabeth remained with her hands folded as before, her eyes wide open, fixed re-

proachfully on her father. She had given her young life to him, borne his roughness, experienced from him no love, no consideration—in every way sacrificed herself to make his home happy, and now he cast her happiness from him, gave her up to a man for whom she had no regard, without considering her feelings in the smallest degree. Then Magdalen looked at the crayon drawing of herself and down at Bessie, and some reminiscence at once painful and yet sweet in its bitterness came back to her—a remembrance, may be, of some sacrifice she had been called to make when about Bessie's age, and the tears came into her eyes.

"Brother," she said, "you are too hasty. The poor child is overcome with surprise. You handle her too roughly. Tell her that her well-being is dear to you, tell her that this plan of yours has been considered by you as the best for her, but do not attempt to drive her, as you might a sheep into the fold to be shorn, with a crack of whip and bark."

"You keep silence, Magdalen," said the Squire. "You have had time to say what you would, and have, it seems, wofully mis-

managed the task set thee. I ought to know how to deal with my children."

"Nay, brother, I cannot be sure of that, after what has fallen out with Anthony."

Magdalen regretted having made this sharp reply when it was too late to recall it.

"You understand me, Bess," said the old man; "I have let you see by the way in which I have treated that rebellious son of mine, that my wishes are not to be slighted, my commands not to be disobeyed. You do as I tell you. Give your hand to Tony Crymes, or else——"

Bessie's calm, steadfast eyes were on him. He did not finish his sentence.

"Or else, what, father?" she asked.

He did not answer her; he put out one hand to the table, leaned on it, and thrust the other behind him under the coat-tails. His brows were knit, and his eyes glittered into stony hardness and cruel resolve.

"I cannot obey you, father," said Bessie.

"You will not!" shouted the old man.

"Father, I neither will, nor can obey you. I have known Fox, I mean Anthony Crymes, ever since I have been a child, but I have never cared for him." She turned to Fox apologetically, even then, in that moment

of trial and pain to herself, she could not endure to say a word that might seem to slight and give a pang to another. "I beg your pardon, Fox, I mean that I have never cared for you more than, in any other way than, as a friend, and as Julian's brother."

"Pshaw! What of that?" asked the old man, somewhat lowering his voice, and attempting to keep his temper under control. "Love comes after marriage where it did not precede it. See what love comes to when it is out of place before it, in your brother's case."

"I cannot promise Anthony Crymes my love, for I know it never will come. I am glad he is the friend of my brother, and as such I regard him, but I esteem him only for what merits he has in him. I never can love him—never—never!"

"Disobedient hussy!" exclaimed the old man, losing the slight control he had exerted momentarily over himself. "Am I to be set at defiance by you as well as by Anthony? By heaven, I did not think there was such folly in the family. It did not come from me—not from my side. I will be obeyed. I will not have it said in

the town that I cannot have my own way with my children."

He looked so angry, so threatening, that Fox interfered. He slipped between Bessie and her father, and said,

"Master Cleverdon, I will have no constraint used. If you attempt to coerce Bessie, then I withdraw at once. I have known and loved her for many years, and would now have hardly dared to offer myself, but that you cast out the suggestion to me. I saw that Bessie did not love me, and I held back, hoping the time might come when she would, perhaps, be guided less by the feelings of the heart and more by the cool reason of the brain. If she refuses me, it shall be a refusal to me, to an offer made in my own way, with delicacy and consideration for her feelings, not with threat and bluster. Excuse plain-speaking, Squire, but such are my views on this matter, and this is a matter that concerns Bessie and me first, and you, Master Cleverdon, afterwards."

"Yes," said Magdalen, "your violence, brother, will effect nothing. You will only drive your remaining child from under your roof, as you drove Anthony."

"Be silent, you magpie!" shouted old Cleverdon, but he looked alarmed.

"Now," said Fox; "you have frightened and offended Bessie, and effected no good. Let her walk home, although it is raining, and I will accompany her part of the way, if not the whole, and speak to her in my own manner, and hear her decision from her own lips."

Bessie stood up.

"I am content," she said; "but do not for a moment think that my determination is to be changed. Have with you, Fox. Father, you will follow when your business in the town is over, and will catch me up. You said, I think, that you were going up to Kilworthy to see Mr. Crymes."

CHAPTER XXXV.

A WET WOOING.

Bessie and Fox walked side by side, but without speaking as long as they were in the street of Tavistock, with houses on both sides. Here there were, perhaps, more numerous puddles, more mud, than outside the town. Moreover, the water that fell on the roofs dripped or shot in streams down on the heads of such as ventured to walk near the walls, and the only escape from these cataracts and douches was in the well-worn middle of the street where the dirt was deepest because the roadway was there most trampled. The ducking from the descending shoots of water, the circumventing of the pools, caused the walk of the two to be no more than approximately side by side. No walk could be direct, but

must consist of a series of festoons and loops; but on passing the last house, Fox came boldly up to the side of Elizabeth Cleverdon, and said—

"Bessie, I am at a disadvantage; who can play the lover in such weather, and how can I lay myself at thy feet when the road is ankle-deep in mire? I should sink into the slough of despond and the mud close over my head and back or ever I had an answer from thee."

"There can and will be no romance in the matter," answered Elizabeth. "It is to me a sad and serious business, for if there be truth in what you say—that you have cared for me, then am I sorry to disappoint you; but, on my honour as a maid, Fox, I never suspected it."

"That may well be, for, Bess, thou art so modest," replied Fox Crymes. "Yet I do assure thee the attachment has been of long time, and has thrown its roots through my heart. Even now—or now most of all, would I have held my tongue had not thy father encouraged me to speak."

"Why most of all now?"

"Because now, Bessie, that thy brother Anthony is out of favour thou are an heiress

with great prospects; and neither would I seem to make my suit to thee because of these prospects, nor to step into the place and profits that should have belonged to Anthony."

Bessie looked round at him gratefully.

"I am glad you think of Anthony," she said.

"Of course I think of him. He is my friend. None have mourned more than I at his estrangement from his father. It has affected him in many ways. Not only is he cut off from Hall and his father, but disappointment has soured him, and I do not believe he is happy with his wife."

"What!—Anthony not happy with his wife!" Bessie sighed and hung her head. She remembered the dance at the Cake's, Anthony's neglect of Urith, and the attention he paid to Julian. No doubt this had occasioned a quarrel when he reached his home. Poor Anthony! Poor Anthony!

"And now," said Bessie, gently—"now that we are quite alone together, let me assure you that though I am thankful to you for the honour you have done me by asking for me, that yet I must beg you to desist from pressing a suit that must be

unsuccessful. I can—after what you have said, and after the good feeling you have shown—I will, respect you. I can do no more."

"You have given your heart to another?" half-asked Fox, with a leer that she did not notice.

"No—no one has my heart, for no one has thought it worth his while to ask for it, except you; and, alas! to you I cannot give it."

"But, if it is still free, may I not put in a claim for it?"

"No—it can never be yours."

"I will not take such a refusal. At bob-apple any boy may jump for the fruit, till it is carried away. Your heart is hung up to be jumped for, and I will not be thrust aside, and refused permission to try my luck along with the rest."

"No one else will think of coming forward."

"There you are mistaken, Bess. Consider what you are now—at all events, what you are esteemed to be. You will inherit Hall and all your father's savings. Your father has made no secret of his determination to disinherit Anthony. He has told

several persons that he has made his will anew, and constituted you his heiress, your husband to take the name of Cleverdon. This is known and talked about everywhere. Do you suppose that with such a prospect there will not be a score of aspirants ready to cast off their names and become at once the husband of the most charming girl anywhere in South Devon, and a rich Squire Cleverdon of Hall?"

Bessie was infinitely hurt and shocked. She to rob her brother of his birthright! God forbid!

"Fox," she said, "this can never be. If I should at any time become owner of Hall, I would give it up immediately to dear Anthony."

"But," said Fox, with a mocking laugh on his face, "is it not likely that your father knows what you would do, and will take precautions against it, by settling the estate through your husband on your eldest son? You could not, were the estate so settled, do as you propose."

Bessie was silent, looking down into the mud, and forgetting to pick her way among the puddles. The rain had formed drops along the eave of her hood, and there

were drops within on the fringes of her eyes.

"You will be persecuted by suitors," Fox continued, "and I ask you, is there any you know about here whom you would prefer to me?"

She did not answer him, she was thinking, with her hood drawn by one hand very close about her face, that no one approaching, not Fox, might see her distress.

"Do not speak of others," said Bessie, at length; "sufficient to let things be till they come. I am, and you need not pretend it is not so—I am but a plain homely girl, and that will damp the ardour of most young men, who sigh for pretty faces."

"You do yourself injustice, Bessie. For my part I look to the qualities of the heart and understanding, and you have a generous and noble heart, and a clear and sound understanding. Beauty withers, such qualities ripen. I never was one to be taken with the glitter of tinsel. I look to and love sterling metal. It was your good qualities which attracted my admiration, and, 'fore Heaven, Bess, I think you uncommon comely."

"I pray you," urged Bessie, "desist

from your suit. I have told thee it is fruitless."

"But I will not desist without a reason. Give me a reason, and I am silent. Without one, I will press on. I have a better right than any of the unknown who will come about thee like horseflies after a-while."

"I do not love thee. Is not that a reason?"

"None at all. I do not see why thou mayest not come to like me."

Bessie walked on some way in silence.

Presently she said, in a plaintive, low voice, "I will give thee, then, a reason; and, after that, turn on thy heel and leave me in peace. I have——" Her voice failed her, and she stepped on some paces before she could recover it. "I tell thee this, Fox, only because thou hast been frank with me, and hast shown me a generous heart. My reason is this—and, Fox, there must, I reckon, be some confidence between two situated as we are—it is this, that long, long ago I did dearly love another, and I love him still."

"Now, Bessie!" exclaimed Fox, standing still in the road, and she halted also, "you

assured me that you had given your heart to none."

"I have given it to none, for none asked it of me."

"I do not understand. You speak riddles."

"Not at all. Cannot a poor, ugly girl love a man—noble, wise, and good—and never let him know it, and never expect that it will be returned? I have heard a tale of a Catholic saint, that he wore a chain of barbed iron about his body under his clothing, where it ate into his flesh and cankered his blood; but none suspected it. He went about his daily tasks, and laughed with the merry-makers; yet all the while the barbs were working deeper into him, and he suffered. There be many poor, ill-favoured—ay, and well-favoured—wenches like that saint. They have their thorny braids about their hearts, and hide them under gay bodices, that none suspect aught. But—God forgive me," said Bessie, humbly, with soft, faltering voice—"God pardon me that I spoke of this as a chain of iron barbs, festering the blood. It is not so. There is no iron there at all, and no fester whatsoever—only very long-drawn pains, and now

and then a little pure, honest blood runs from the wound. There, Fox, I have shown this only to thee. No one else knows thereof, and I have shown it thee only as a reason why I cannot love thee."

Fox Crymes made a grimace.

Bessie stepped along her way. Fox followed.

Presently she turned, hearing his steps, with a gesture of surprise, and said, "What, not gone yet?"

"No, Bessie, I admire thee the more, and I do not even now give over the pursuit. I would yet learn, hast thou any thought that he whom thou lovest will be thine?"

"No! no! never; I do not desire it."

"Not desire it?"

"Nay, for he has loved another; he has never given me a thought. I must not say that. Kind and good he has ever been—a friend; but he can and will be nothing more."

"There you mistake, Bessie. When he learns that you are the heiress to Hall his eyes will be wonderfully opened to your charms, and he will come and profess he ever loved thee." He spoke bitterly, laying

bare his own base motives in so doing. But Bessie was too guileless to suspect him. She reared herself up; his words conveyed such a slight on the honour of Luke that she could not endure it.

"Never! never!" she said, and her eyes flashed through her tears. "Oh, Fox! if you knew who he was you would never have said that."

"But if he should come and solicit thy hand?"

"He cannot. He has told me that he loved another."

She resumed her walk.

Fox continued to attend her, in silence. He was puzzled what line to adopt. What she had told him had surprised and disconcerted him. That Bessie — the ordinary, plain-faced, methodical Bessie—should have had her romance was to him a surprise.

How little do we know of what passes under our very feet. Who dreamed of magnetic currents till the magnetometer registered their movements? Waves roll through the solid crust of earth without making it tremble at all; magnetic storms rage around us without causing a disturbance in the heavens, and but for the un-

closing of our eyes through the scientific instrument we should know nothing about them—have laughed at the thought of their existence.

"I must needs walk on with thee," said Fox; "for I cannot leave thee till thy father come and overtake thee. And if I walk at thy side, well—we must talk, at all events I must, for my tongue has not the knack of lying still behind my teeth."

Fox was at heart angry at his ill-success; he had hoped to have made a great impression on Bessie by the declaration of his love. She was but an ordinarily-favoured girl, as he knew well enough had never been sought by young men, always thrust aside, accustomed to see others preferred to herself—at a dance to be left against the wall without a partner, after church to be allowed to accompany her father home, without any lad seeking to attach himself to her and disengage her from the old man. To a girl so generally disregarded his addresses ought to have come as a surprise, and have been accepted with eagerness. He was in a rage with her for the emphatic and resolute manner in which she refused him.

"Let us talk of Anthony," said he.

"With all my heart," she replied, with a sigh of relief.

"Do you see any way in which your brother can be received again into favour?" he inquired.

She shook her head. "Nothing that I can say has any effect on my father. He will not permit me to go near Willsworthy."

"Then I can say what is the only way in which peace and good will may be brought back into the family. It lies in your hands to build a bridge between your father and Tony. I am certain that in his heart the old Squire is discontented that things should remain as they are, but he has spoken the word, and he is too proud to withdraw it. If it could have come to pass that you took my hand, then I do not believe that your father would resist our united persuasion. See how much weight we could have brought to bear on him, how we could have watched our opportunities, how—if it should happen at any time that Tony should have a child, we might have brought it to the old man, set it on his knees, and then together have taken the right moment to plead for Anthony."

Bessie drew a long breath.

"I would do a great deal, almost anything to bring about what you speak of, but this means is beyond my power. It cannot be. I know now how good and faithful a friend you are to my dear, dear, brother Anthony. I must again speak very plainly. I do desire, Fox, in all ways to spare you a wound, but you will take no refusal. You said, 'Let us talk of Anthony,' and you work it round to the same point. I shall never marry; I cannot marry you; I shall take no one else. I pray you desist from your pursuit. You heard what Aunt Magdalen said, that my father, if he persisted, would drive me to run away, as did Anthony. It will be so. If my father will not accept my refusal, then I must go. I shall go to Anthony and his wife, or to my aunt. I could not swear what is false to you or to any one else. Before the minister of God I would not promise love, and love to my husband only, knowing that I could not love, for my love was elsewhere. No," added Bessie, shaking her head, "I must be true, always true, to myself, and before God."

As she spoke, both heard the clatter of horse's hoofs. They halted, parted, one on

each side of the road, and looked back. A man was galloping along, with his head down against the rain, he did not look up, but remained bowed as he approached.

"Father!" called Bessie, for she recognized both the horse and the rider. He did not draw rein, apparently he did not hear her. Certainly he saw neither her nor Fox. Wrapped in his own thoughts, forgetful of his daughter, of his promise to take her up, he galloped past, and sent the mud flying from his horse's hoofs bespattering her as he passed.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN TEMPTATION.

Anthony entered the little parlour, or bower, of Kilworthy, at dusk. It looked comfortable and bright. A fire of logs burnt on the hearth, with turf thrust into the interstices between the logs, and the pleasant fragrance of the peat filled the room, without being strong enough to be offensive. Outside, everything was grey and moist and dull, within a red and yellow sparkle, and a sense of dryness. The walls were hung with good paintings, in silvered frames, richly carved. A crimson mat was on the polished floor, and embroidered crimson curtains hung by the window.

Julian was doing no work. She was sitting by the fire in a day-dream, in much the attitude that was assumed by Bessie at

that very time in the little parlour of Aunt Magdalen's house, beside her cold, cheerless hearth.

Anthony had thrown off his wet cloak and sopped hat, and was fairly dry beneath them, he wore high and strong boots, and these he had made as clean as was possible on the mats before entering.

"How are you, Julian? Where is Fox?"

Julian started as he spoke. Her mind had been engaged on him, and the sound of his voice came on her unwelcome at that moment.

Sitting over her fire she had been considering her conduct, asking herself whither she was going, what was to be the end of her encouragement of Anthony.

She repeated to herself as excuse, that she had thrown the glove at Urith, and that the challenge had been accepted. The contest was a fair and open one; each used what weapons she had. If men might call each other out and fight, why not women also contend on their own special ground, in their own manner?

Urith had won in the first round, had carried off the prize, but in this second round, she—Julian—was beating her ad-

versary. She could not take the prize over to herself, and wear it as her own; that she knew well enough; but she could render it worthless in the eyes of Urith—spoil irretrievably her pleasure in it.

Was she justified in pursuing her advantage? Was the result she would arrive at one to fill her with content? She would destroy the happiness of Urith, perhaps that also of Anthony, break in pieces all domestic concord for ever in Willsworthy, to satisfy her own pride and revenge. She loved Anthony, always had loved him, but had sufficient cool resolution not to go a step with him beyond what she would allow herself, to establish the completeness of her triumph over Urith. She loved him out of pure selfishness, without the smallest regard for his well-being, hardly more compunction for the torture she was administering than has the child that plays with a cockchafer by thrusting a pin through it, attaching a thread to the pin, and whirling the insect round his head. But Julian was not suffered to proceed without some qualms of conscience, some warnings given by her better nature, and when Anthony entered, it was at a moment when she had almost

resolved to give up the contest, satisfied with what she had gained.

Fox was out, answered Julian to Anthony's inquiry, he had gone into the town. Then she was silent.

Anthony went into the window, where was a box seat, and planted himself there, not looking at her, but looking away, at the door; and he took his knee between his hands. Both remained silent. He was weary, not with the length of his walk, but with walking wrapped in a cloak that had become heavy with moisture, and with the closeness of the day. He was, moreover, in no good mood, dissatisfied with himself, discontented with the world, and at a loss what to say, now that he found himself in the company of the girl he had come to see.

Julian pouted, and looked at the fire. The day, with its continuous drizzle, had been one of tedium to her. She was not accustomed to work, like Bessie, whose hands were never idle. She took up some embroidery, tried to paint, attempted knitting, and threw all aside, after ten minutes, with restless impatience. She had taken a book in the afternoon, read a chapter,

remembered that she had read the same book before, and cast it into the window seat. She did not even replace it on its proper shelf. Then she had fallen to her desultory musings, to listening languidly to her conscience, and answering its remonstrances evasively. She had, as already said, almost resolved to leave Anthony alone, and to be content with what mischief she had already done. But the resolution was no more than *almost* arrived at; for she had not the moral courage to make a final resolution to which she would force herself to adhere.

Anthony, on his side, had been spoiled; so, on her side, had Julian. He had been flattered and made much of as the heir to Hall; she had been treated in a similar manner as heiress to Kilworthy. Her mother had died early, her father was an unpractical political and religious dreamer, who had exercised no control over her; and she had been brought up chiefly by servants, who had fawned on her, and given her whatever she wanted. She was therefore wayward, wilful, and selfish, with no fixed principles, and no power of self-control—a feminine reflex of Anthony, but with more passion and latent force of character than he.

The two sat silent for full ten minutes, each looking in an opposite direction, and each with a shoulder turned to the other. Anthony had come hoping to be received with pleasure; but Julian showed no alacrity in receiving his visit, and this helped to depress him.

Presently Julian turned her face over her shoulder, and said, "I suppose you do not know where Fox is, or you would not have come to his lair."

"Certainly I do not know."

Anthony looked at the window-glass. Either the fire had considerably heated the atmosphere of the room, or the wind without had veered northward and made the air colder, for breath had condensed on the glass. He put up his finger, and wrote on a pane "A. C." Without was summer twilight.

"I know, for he was too full of his plans to keep them from bursting forth at his mouth," said Julian.

"I dare be bound it was so," answered Anthony, listlessly; then on another pane he wrote "J. C."

"And you are not interested to know whither he has gone and what he seeks?"

"No," said Anthony. "I came here to see him. I found no one at Cudlip Town, and Sol Gibbs is dull company at Willsworthy."

"You have other company there than Sol Gibbs."

"Whom do you mean?"

"There is Urith—your wife," with a sharp flash of her eye out of the corner; and insensibly she put one knee up and hugged it, as did Anthony.

"Oh! Urith," he repeated, in a tone in which she discerned something like a sneer.

"Your wife."

"One cannot be talking to a wife all day," he said, peevishly, and let fall his leg and loosened his plaited fingers. She instinctively did the same.

"Can you not? Oh, indeed, that is news to me. I should have thought that you would never have lacked material for talk. Flames, darts—hymeneal altars smoking."

He looked sullenly out of the window, turning his back to her, and made no reply. She waited for a response, then said,

"If not these subjects, then chickens and goslings."

He turned his head impatiently, and said,

"You are mocking me. You!—and I came here for comfort from you — you, Julian!"

There was pain in his manner and expression, and she was somewhat touched.

"Oh, Anthony, you said you had come here after Fox, and now you say you came to see me."

He passed his hand over his forehead to wipe away the drops formed there. He did not answer her, to correct the effect of his words, but put up his hand to the glass, and with a shaking finger drew on the diamond pane, between the initials, a lover's knot.

"Anthony," she said, after a pause, "I suppose I must tell you why Fox has gone into Tavistock, for it concerns you mightily, and you should not be kept in the dark concerning him. Do you recall what I said when we were dancing together at Wringworthy?"

"No, Julian, nothing. That was a bright and delightful dream. I have awaked out of it, and remember nothing."

"I told you that Fox had set his mind on Bessie — your Bessie. You scouted the notion, but I spoke the truth. And he has been as open to his father and me

thereon as is possible for him. You, Anthony, have a good and kind nature—you are too ready to trust any one. Always upright and straightforward yourself, never thinking evil in your heart, never putting forth a foot to trip up an enemy—certainly never a friend."

Anthony's head was raised. This was what he wanted—a few words of commendation came down as warm rays of sunshine on his depressed and drooping heart.

"You, Tony, have never mistrusted Fox, for it was not in you to mistrust any one. But I know his real nature. He is seeking his own ends. He has been over at Hall two and three times a week, and——" she laughed, "will you believe it?—has been cajoling the old man, your father, into the belief that it is possible he may win and wear me, as—as—" she hesitated. "As he was disappointed——"

Anthony turned and looked at her, and their eyes met. Hers fell, and he looked again hastily at the window pane—at the initials, and the lover's knot between them. The moisture had collected in the figures he had described, and had formed drops at the bottom of each downstroke.

"That is not all. Whether your father builds greatly on this or not I cannot say; but Fox has dangled the prospect before him, whilst he snatched at something for himself, even at Bessie, the heiress of Hall, now that you are thrown out into the wet and cold."

Anthony sighed involuntarily. Yes, he was out, indeed, in the wet and cold at Willsworthy—not metaphorically only, but actually as well.

"Now," continued Julian, "you shall hear the whole plan as worked out. Fox has gone in to-day to meet Bessie and your father at your Aunt Magdalen's house, and your aunt has been inveigled into uniting her persuasion to the commands of your father to induce Bessie to jump down the Fox's throat."

"It cannot be," said Anthony. "Bess will never—and she does not care for Fox."

"She may not have the power to resist. Girls have not the daring and independence of you men. When Fox has got his way, then he intends to change his name, and live at Hall with your father, who will re-settle the property on him and his heirs,

that so there may still be an Anthony Cleverdon of Hall."

"Never! No—never!" exclaimed Anthony, springing to his feet. "He cannot—he shall not do that. Fox will never play me such a base trick as that! Bessie never will lend herself to be made a tool of like that!"

"Bessie is true to you—that never doubt; but do not lean on my brother: he is false to every one."

"He never shall become a Cleverdon. What! Good heavens! He take my name, my place, my rights, my inheritance, my everything?"

"Not everything," said Julian, maliciously. "He does not stretch a hand for your Urith and for Willsworthy—only for what you tossed away as valueless."

Anthony uttered an oath, and cast himself back where he had been before, in the seat in the window, and put his hands to his brow and clasped them there, leaning his head against the window sill.

Then, for some while, both remained silent, but Julian turned herself about in her seat to look at him.

Was that the same Anthony she had

loved and admired? This dejected, sad man, with his head bowed, his face pale, and lined with trouble? It was certain that he was vastly altered. Her woman's eye detected a difference in his clothing. Formerly he had been ever dapper; without foppishness, his dress always of the best and well cared for; now it was old and worn, in places threadbare. Nor was it, though poor, yet with the merit of being attended to. Timely stitches had not been given where they had been needed, nor tags and buttons added that had fallen off. His boots were shabby and trodden down at the heel. The wet and dirt undoubtedly gave to them a special shabbiness on that day, but Julian could see that they were out of shape and past their best days. The trimness and gloss had gone out of Anthony's outer case, and his spirits within had lost as much, if not more. There was none of the ancient merriment, none of the self-conscious swagger, none of the old assurance of manner in him. He had become morose, peevish; he showed a diffidence which was the reverse of his former self. It was a diffidence mingled with resentment, the product of his consciousness that the world was

turned against him, and of his bitterness at knowing this. Anthony's nature was one that required sunshine, as a peacock demands it that its beauty and splendour may appear. Come rain, and how the feathers clog and droop and draggle—how squalid a fowl it appears! So was Anthony now—a faded disconsolate shadow of his old self, without the nerve to bear up against what depressed him, the adaptability to shape himself to his new surroundings.

As Julian looked at him she pitied him. Her love for him warmed her, and made her forget the cruelty of the part she was playing. The child of impulse, feeling this qualm of compassion, she rose and gently came across the room to him.

He heard her not, coming in her light slippers on the carpet, so engrossed was he in his wretched thoughts. Every one had turned against him—every one in whom he had trusted. His friend Fox, the only man who had seemed not to be affected by the general adverse tone of opinion, he had given him the most stinging blow of all. He was now at variance with his father, with his friend—if Bessie consented to take Fox, he could never regard her with esteem

again; at home he had quarrelled with Uncle Solomon, and raised his hand against him; he had alienated from him his wife; his aunt was in league against him; the servants at Willsworthy would take sides with their mistress. What wretchedness! what hopelessness was his! There was no one—no one but Julian who had a word of kindness, a spark of feeling for him. He heard the rustle of her gown and looked up.

She was standing by him, looking down on his ruffled hair, that hung over his hands, clasped upon his forehead. He hastily brushed away the scattered locks.

"Oh, Anthony!" she said, "what have you been doing here? What hast' drawn on the glass?"

He slightly coloured, put his hand to the panes and covered them.

"Nay," she said, taking hold of his hand, and drawing it away, "nay, let me read."

"I have writ," said he, bitterly, "what might have been, and then——" he gulped down his rising emotion, "then I had been——"

She stooped and kissed him on the brow, "Poor boy!"

Instantly he threw his arms round her neck and drew her face to his, and kissed her cheeks and lips, passionately. She—she alone remained to him—and yet—how far apart they were.

She sprang away with a cry.

The door was open, and in it stood old Anthony Cleverdon.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ANOTHER TEMPTATION.

ANTHONY rose, when he saw his father, with instinctive filial respect, but he did not look him in the face. He could not do this.

"Hah!" said the old man, entering the room, and closing the door behind him. "I had come here with an intent that is now set aside. I had come, Julian, to tell thee that it was yet in thy power to weld together the estates of Hall and Kilworthy, notwithstanding what has occurred—that is, if thou wouldst overlook a certain disparity in years, and keep thine eyes fixed on the main advantage. But that is over. I am glad I came when I chanced, and in time to save me from running a great risk. Thou art too free with thy kisses, too lavish in thy love to please me."

He spoke as though what he said must wither Julian, crush her under the sense of her great loss. His assurance that she must be attracted by the same ambition as himself was so grotesque that Julian at once rallied from the confusion that had covered her, laughed, and said :

"You do me a mighty honour."

"Not at all—I decline to show you the honour."

"So much the better. When I walk through a wood I do not like to have the bramble claw at me. If it does, then I must turn and put my foot on it. Let the bramble hug the nettle, and not aim at the lady."

Her impudence staggered him.

"It is mighty sport," she continued, "to hear that little Hall desired to hitch itself on to the skirts of Kilworthy. But Master Cleverdon, if thou art in a marrying mood, prithee go to the next giglet fair, and choose thee there a wench."

Her insolence had its effect; the effect designed. Instead of being attacked by the old Squire, she was the assailant, and she hit him where she knew she could keenly wound him, so as to draw off his

thoughts from what he had just seen. He was offended and angry.

"There," said she—"sit down in my seat by the fire. I meant no harm; but as you were absurd on your side, I made grimaces on mine. I am glad you are here, and face to face with Anthony, for, mayhap, I can persuade you to that which, unpersuaded, you were loth to do."

The old man was so angry that he did not answer her. He remained near the door, doubtful whether to retire or to come forward. He had not expected to meet his son there, and was unprepared for an interview; though hardly regretting it, for, in his bitter and resentful spirit, he was willing that Anthony should hear from his own lips what he designed—learn to the full the completeness of the severance between them.

"Whatever persuasion you may attempt," said he, looking at Julian, "comes at a wrong time, after you have shown me that you are a person who, not respecting herself, deserves no respect from another, and after you have grossly insulted me. But I will listen to you, though I tell you what you say will not weigh with me as a feather."

"If that be so," laughed Julian, "I will spare myself the trouble. But look at your son; look at him calmly, and tell me whether I was wrong in pitying him, ay, and if, in consideration of old, tried friendship, that has been almost cousinship—so well have we known each other since childhood—was I so very wrong in lightly touching his brow with my lips, for from my heart I was sorry for him. Think what it would have been for you, when you married, had your father lived and treated you as you have treated Anthony! Is a man to be cast out of every home because he has committed one folly? I dare stake my word that Anthony has rued his act almost daily; and is all his regret to count for nothing?"

"A man must take the consequences of what he has done."

"Julian I do not wish you to plead my cause," said Anthony, coming before his father; "I will speak to him myself. I want to ask of him a question or two."

"I will answer them," said the old man. "Say on."

"I desire to know for certain whether you intend to give Bessie to Fox Crymes?"

"Yes, I do."

"And she consents?"

"All are not so disobedient as yourself."

"And if she refuses?"

"She will not refuse. I can but let her go, as I let you go. But she will not refuse; I have that to say to her which will make her give way."

"Then if she takes Fox, do you intend to take him into Hall?"

"Yes, I do."

"And under my name?"

"Certainly. He changes his name of Crymes to that of Cleverdon when he becomes my son."

"Then I tell you it shall not be. There shall not be another Anthony Cleverdon in Hall. I give you and Fox fair warning. There cannot—there shall not—be a supplanter in Hall bearing my name."

"We shall see."

"Yes, you shall see. Tell Fox what I have said."

"Tell him yourself. I will be no bearer of messages between you."

"Mr. Cleverdon," said Julian, "I cannot let you meet and part in my presence, spoiling all my pleasure in this little room for ever with the remembrance of this

scene, without one more effort to bring you to agreement. Come, now—what if Anthony returns to you?"

"Returns to me?"

"Yes, what if he throws up all connexion with Willsworthy? He is wretched there—poverty-stricken. He is unhappy in a hundred ways. Look at his face. Where is the old brightness—where the old pride? He has lost all the ancient merry Anthony, and is now a sad one. Let him come back to Hall, and leave Urith to manage with her uncle—to manage or mismanage—as before, till all goes there to pieces. He has committed a boyish folly, and he knows it. He has thrown away gold for dross, and he has found it out. He will now be twice the Tony to you that he was. Then he was thoughtless, was careless, and devil-may-care; now he has learned a lesson, and learned it so sharply that he will never forget it again. He has learned what disobedience costs—what it is to go against a father—what boy's fancies are compared with matured plans in the head of a man. Give him that chance. Come, you do not know Fox as I know him. Take him into your house, and he will not be more dutiful

to you than has been your own Tony. He will make you unhappy, and your Bessie wretched. I saw by Tony's face, when he came here, that he had quarrelled with his wife. He came here because his home was hateful to him—because it was unendurable for him to be there any more. We cannot retain him here. Let him go to thee, and there will be an end to Fox and his story with Bessie. Anthony will be dutiful and loving henceforth, and cling to thee, and esteem thee, as he never clung to thee and esteemed thee heretofore."

Anthony was speechless. The blood rushed into his face. Everything might be as it was—or almost everything.

Old Anthony Cleverdon stood irresolute.

He had misgivings relative to Fox. One crafty, malevolent nature mistrusts another of the same quality. His daughter's peace of mind troubled him little, but he was by no means certain that Fox, once in the house, might not presume, and that there would not be sharp contests between them. Moreover, when Fox was there, married to his daughter, his place would be assured, and the old man could not well drive him from it. There were other reasons which

made the old Squire feel that, to some extent, Fox would be unassailable, and might be eminently disagreeable.

The suggestion made by Julian was inviting. In the depth of his heart lurked love for his only son; his old pride in him was there, and was wounded and sore with the spectacle of the lad humbled, sinking out of men's favour, and out of his old dignity. He now looked at him, and saw what an alteration had taken place in him—how oldened and worn in face he was, how shabby in his clothing.

"Do you know, Mr. Cleverdon," pursued Julian, "why it was that poor Tony caught me by the neck and kissed me? It was because he was so utterly forlorn and disconsolate; he had lost all his friends, his heart was void through bereavement from his father; he was estranged from that Jacob, that supplanter, Fox; he saw his own sister turning against him, and—I doubt not he has not found that solace and sufficiency in his own home that would make up for these mighty losses. He held me, because he had none other. I do not want him, I have no right to him—let me cast him off—but only on to his father's bosom, into his father's arms."

The old man went to the window and looked forth into the twilight. His face was agitated. He must have time to consider.

Anthony, moreover, remained mute, and his face was troubled. A terrible temptation was presented to him. He believed that now, were he to throw himself at his father's feet, take his hand, and ask his forgiveness, the old man would receive him back at once into favour on the terms proposed by Julian. That he would forgive him on any other, he might not expect. That he knew full well.

And the old man saw that an opportunity was offered to deal the most insulting and cruel stroke to the daughter of the man who had incurred his undying hatred. He could by a word rob her of her husband, of the prize she had laboured to win, but which he could prevent her from retaining.

To Julian was offered the most complete and open triumph over her enemy. A triumph more complete than she could have hoped to gain. Anthony could be nothing to her, he would remain as a friend, that was all; but she would see, and show to Urith, her threat made good, to wrench Anthony away from her.

Anthony stood with downcast eyes. The temptation was a strong one—strong to a young man who had been humoured and allowed to have his own way uncontrolled, allowed to follow his pleasure or whim without hindrance. He could not return home without having to face his wife, angered and resentful, without having to acknowledge himself to have been in the wrong. Anthony Crymes was playing him a treacherous and cruel trick, and here was a chance offered him of at once recovering his old position, wiping out his past mistake, and discomfiting Fox when on the eve of success. Was he sure that he could ever be on the same terms as before with Urith? Had she not been gradually estranged from him, till she had declared to him that she hated him, that she wished she had never seen him? Would it not be a relief to her to be rid of him, to be spared any more domestic broils?

Old Anthony Cleverdon was at the window, and as he stood there he marked the initials drawn on the fogged glass, and turned and looked at his son. Young Anthony noticed the look, and observed what had attracted his father's attention.

He moved hastily to the window, and his father drew away, went to the fireplace, and rested his elbow against the mantel-shelf and fixed his eyes intently on his son. So also did Julian. Both saw that the moment was a crucial one. The young man was forced to make up his mind on a point which would determine his whole after-life. It was more than that, it was a crucial moment in his moral life. He must now take a step upwards or downwards, in the path of right or that of wrong. This neither Julian nor his father considered, intent only on their selfish ends. But this appeared clearly to Anthony. His inner consciousness spoke out and told him plainly where went the path of duty and where lay the deflexion from it. But the path of duty was a painful one, full of humiliations, promising no happiness, only a repetition of contests with a sulky wife, and jars with the foolish Solomon Gibbs, of struggle against poverty, of labour like a common hired workman, of loss for ever of his old position, and deprivation of all the amusements that had filled his former life.

He and Urith did not suit each other.

His temperament was sanguine, his spirit mirthful; he was sociable, and full of the sparkle of youth; whereas she was moody, almost morose, had no humour and laughter in her soul, brooded over imagined wrongs as well as those that were real, and could as little accommodate herself to his mood as could he to hers. Surely it were best, under such circumstances, that they should part.

Now Anthony was standing at the window where he had stood before when he drew those initials on the panes, in the place occupied recently by his father. So full was he of his thoughts, of the rolling of conflicting waves of feeling, that he forgot where he was, forgot the presence of his father and of Julian—the very sense of the lapse of time was gone from him. Though he looked through the window, he saw nothing.

Then, all at once, uncalled for, there broke and oozed forth in his heart the old vein of love which had been filled with so hot and full a flood when he was Urith's suitor; he saw her with the old eyes once more, and looked in mental vision once more into the sombre eyes, as he had on the moor, when he lifted her into his saddle,

and there came over him that sensation of mingled love and fear. It seemed to him that now only did he understand the cause of that fear; it was fear lest he himself should prove a wreck through lack of love and devotion to her. He thought now of how, after their wedding, on his coming to Willsworthy, he had taken her in his arms, how her dark head had lain on his bosom, and he had stooped and kissed her brow, and she had looked up into his face with eyes expressive of perfect confidence, of intensest love. He thought now how he had forced her against her will, against her conscience, to marry him prematurely, after her mother's death, and against the dying command of that mother. He thought how that he had lived on her estate, had been, as it were, her pensioner. He thought also of the efforts she had made, efforts he had perceived, to accommodate herself to him, to meet his humour, to overcome her own gloom, to struggle against the bad habits of slovenliness into which the household had fallen, and to correct her own want of order, because she saw it pained her husband. She had done a great deal for him, and what had he done for her?

Grumbled, been peevish, disappointed her. He recalled that evening at the Cake's, where he had slighted her. He thought of how he had trifled with his old regard for Julian, allowed her to lure him away from his wife, and had let her see that he was no more at one with Urith, and that he wished he could have undone the marriage and re-tied the old threads that had bound him to Julian. She—this Julian, had been playing with him—she, for her own ends, had been making mischief between him and his wife—and what had he done?

His eyes were opened, and he saw the initials on the glass, and the love-knot between them.

With the blood surging to his brow and cheeks, and a fire in his eye, he raised his hand, and angrily brushed his palm over the three panes, effacing utterly the characters there inscribed, then he remained with uplifted hand and forefinger extended, still as in dream, unconscious that he was being watched.

A new thought had occurred to him—that he was about to become a father.

A father! and he away at Hall, whilst the deserted Urith sat at Willsworthy—

wan, with tears on her cheek, drip, drip, over the cradle he had treated so insultingly —her cradle, which he had deemed unworthy of his child, and which, for all that, with his child in it, he was inclined to abandon!

Then the blood went out of Anthony's face, went back to his heart, as he grew pale and still with the thought of the infamy of the conduct that had been his, had he yielded to the temptation.

And tears, tears of shame at himself, of love for Urith, of infinite longing for that little child that was to be his, and to nestle in his arms, filled his throat and choked him. With a trembling finger on another clouded pane he drew an U and interlaced with it an A, twisting and turning the initials about, weaving them inextricably together, till the U was lost in the A, and the A confounded with the U.

He could not speak. He did not look round. With his eyes fixed before him, and his mind full of the thoughts that opened to him, he went out of the room, out of the house, and spoke to no one.

But old Anthony and Julian knew his decision—knew it from his finger-writing on the little diamond-pane.

Yet the old man would not accept it—he called after his son.

"I give thee three days. I will do no more for three days in the matter."

But Anthony did not turn his head or answer.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ON THE ROAD.

Fox Crymes walked on towards Hall with Bessie. He could not well leave her to take the rest of her course alone, after the old man, her father, had ridden past, forgetting her, and leaving her to make her way home without him. They therefore walked on together, speaking at intervals and disconnectedly to each other, Bessie feeling the irksomeness of her position, and he unwilling further to jeopardize his suit by pressing it on her any more. He had said what was sufficient, and he left the father to use pressure to force her to comply with his wishes.

The two had not, however, proceeded more than a mile before they saw Squire Cleverdon riding back to meet them. He

had recalled his promise before he reached home, and then remembered having passed two persons whom he did not particularly observe, but whom he concluded were his daughter and Fox.

The first impression he had received from Anthony's conduct was that he put the offer from him altogether; and yet, on further consideration, he persuaded himself that he had been mistaken. Had Anthony finally decided to reject his offer, why had he not said so in words? The old man's nature was coarse—he could not understand the struggles of a generous mind and resistance to mean motives. Anthony had not spoken, because he did not choose to speak before Julian, because he thought it seemly to affect difficulty of persuasion, because he wanted time in which to consider it, because — because — the father could find many reasons why Anthony should not immediately close with the proposal.

The more the old Squire turned the matter over, the more obvious it became to him that Anthony would do as he wished. It was inconceivable to him that he should persist in a course of opposition to his best interests. The boy was proud; but he had

learned, by sore experience, that pride brought to misery. He had tried his strength against his father's—had shown what he could do; and now, if he gave way, he was not humiliated. Why, in the Civil Wars, when Salcombe Castle was held by Sir Edmund Fortescue for five months against the Roundheads, and held after every other fort in the country had been taken or had surrendered; and then, when starved into yielding, it was on the most honourable terms, and Sir Edmund marched forth with all the honours of war, bearing away with him the key of the castle he had so gallantly defended. This was no disgrace to him, it was a proud act of which all Devon men would speak with elation. Why then should not Anthony surrender? He should march forth with flying colours, and it would be no blow to his self-respect, no jar to his pride. The old man, having worked himself into the conviction that his case was won, was full of elation, and, with the petty spite of a mean mind, he resolved at once to show Fox he had no longer need of him. Then it was that he remembered that Fox and Bessie were to walk towards Hall till

he caught them up, and he turned his horse's head and rode back till he met them.

"Heigh, there!" shouted the old man; "how goes the suit, Tony Crymes? Hast thou won her consent?" He paused for an answer.

"Her mother brought her naught," he continued, when Fox remained silent, not well knowing what answer to make.

"That I know," said Fox; "but he who wins Bessie Cleverdon wins a treasure."

"I am glad thou thinkest so. I hope that will satisfy thee. Come, Tony, lend a hand to the maid's foot, and help her up on the pillion behind me."

Fox obeyed; the dirty road had soiled Bessie's boot, so that he could not preserve a clean hand.

"Find her heavy, eh?" asked the Squire, in a mocking tone. "Much gold and many acres stick to thy hand when thou puttest it forth to her, eh?"

Fox looked questioningly at the old man. His tone was changed.

"Bessie will bring luck that will adhere to whatever hand holds her," said the young man.

"No doubt—no doubt," said the Squire. "You may walk at our side, and I will have a word with thee. Come on to Hall if it give thee pleasure. The road is well known to thee, thou hast trod it many a time of late. I doubt but soon thou thinkest to set up thy home there, and not to have to run to and fro as heretofore."

Fox looked again inquiringly and uneasily at the old man. He did not understand this new style of banter.

"Thou hast helped Bessie now into pillion, and I suppose thou art reckoning on the stuffing of the pad on to which thou thinkest her hand will help thee up, eh?"

Fox, usually ready with a word, was uncertain how to meet these sallies, and still remained silent.

The old man rode on, casting an occasional glance, full of cynicism, at young Crymes, who walked at the side of the horse.

Fox would not return till he was enlightened on this change in his manner; nor would he say much, resolving on silence as the best method of forcing old Cleverdon to show what was in his mind.

"What dost' say to Anthony coming

home?" asked the Squire of his daughter, turning his head over his shoulder.

"Anthony—is he really coming to Hall?" gasped Bessie, her heart leaping with gladness.

"It will be a pleasure to thee to be able to retain the name of Crymes," sneered the Squire, turning to the walker. "A fine, ancient, gentle name; thou did'st doubt about exchanging it for one less venerable—that of Cleverdon, though of better sound, and the name that goes up, whilst Crymes goes down?"

Anthony Crymes's colour changed. "I do not understand what you aim at," he said, in uncertain tone.

"Nay, there is naught hard to be understood in what I say. If Anthony should come back to me, then there will be no need for Tony Crymes to spend some forty guineas to obtain license to call himself Cleverdon."

"Then Anthony is coming back! Oh, father!" exclaimed Bessie, "this is glad tidings." She disregarded all his hints and allusions to her marriage with Fox.

"This it is—you, Bess, say you are pleased to hear it, and I am very sure

it will delight Tony Crymes. This it is—my Anthony has had the offer made him by me that he shall return to Hall, and all be forgiven and forgot that was between us."

"Oh, father, and you will receive Urith!"

"Not so fast, Bess. Anthony comes back, but never, never, will I suffer that hussy to cross my threshold. I swore that when he married her, and I will not go from my oath. No—Anthony returns, but not with that creature—that beggar wench. He comes himself. He comes alone."

"He cannot, father; he cannot—she is his wife."

"She is, as his madness made it to be—she is his wife. But he is tired of the folly; he repents it. He will be glad to be quit of her. He comes back to me, and she remains in her beggary at Willsworthy."

"Never, father! never. Anthony could not have agreed to that."

"I tell thee he did; that is, he has almost agreed to it. He did not close with the offer I made at once, but, for appearance sake, made some difficulty—yet only for appearance sake. I have given him three days, and in that time he will have let the matter be noised abroad, have broken his

intention to the girl, and have made himself ready to return to me."

"Father!" said Bessie, in a voice choked with agitation, "I can never regard—never think of Anthony again, in the old way, if he do this. He must not leave his wife. He swore before God to hold to her in poverty or in wealth till death, and thou wilt make him forswear himself."

"His first duty he owes to me—nay, he owes it to himself, to return from the evil ways in which he has gone. Heaven set him in Hall, and he went against Heaven when he left it; now he is the prodigal that has been among swine, but comes back to his father. That is Scripture—that is the Word of God, and stands before all foolish words said in oath, without weighing what they meant."

Fox Crymes caught the bridle, and stayed the horse.

"Is this jest, or is it earnest?" he asked, huskily.

"It is most serious and solemn earnest," answered the Squire.

"Then I insist on a word with thee, and I will hold the bridle till thou dismount. I will not let thee go on till I have spoken

alone with thee. Let Bessie go forward, we must say somewhat together."

Squire Cleverdon had no whip, so he struck spurs into the flanks of his horse; but Fox held the rein, and, though the beast plunged and kicked out, he would not let it break away. Bessie was almost thrown off, and in her danger threatened to drag her father with her.

"Nay, thou shalt not escape me," said Fox. "Dismount, Master Cleverdon, and tell me plainly what this new matter is between thee and thy graceless fool of a son, or I will make the horse fling thee into the mud, and perhaps break thy neck."

The old man thought it best to comply, and, growling, he dismounted. Then Fox let go his hold of the rein, and bade Bessie ride forward beyond earshot.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Fox, who was livid with rage and mortification, so livid, that had there been day instead of twilight, it would have been seen that the freckles on his face stood out as black spots on the hide of a coach-dog. "It is ill to trifle with me. I was to have your daughter, and succeed to Hall, I was to take your name, and step into all the

rights forfeited by Anthony. You brought me face to face with Bessie at her aunt's, and then sent me walking back towards Hall with her, to press my case. When all is nearly over, then you turn round, cast me over, and reinstate that son who has maltreated and half-blinded me, and make a mock of me for my pains?"

"It is you who have trifled with me," retorted the Squire, with less heat, but more bitterness. "You told me that you would urge my suit with your sister; you brought me weekly accounts of how she was becoming more disposed to think of me, you flattered and encouraged me, and all the while you knew——"

"I knew what? I knew nothing, save that you are old, and she young."

"That is not it," said the Squire, peevishly, "that is not what I refer to. You knew that she was encouraging my son, and that the old attachment that subsisted before this hateful affair with Urith Malvine had reasserted itself."

"It is false," answered Fox, furiously, "not content with making your sport with me, you insult my sister."

"I suppose you will not dispute the

testimony of my own eyes," sneered old Cleverdon.

"And to what do they bear testimony?"

"To what I said. I entered the parlour where they were, she standing over him, at the window; he seated, with his arms thrown about her neck, kissing her, and above them on the glass, scrawled by his finger, their initials woven together, with a true lover's knot."

Fox glared at him, in speechless wrath.

"Now—what say you to that?" asked the old man. "With such proceedings, allowed, connived at in your house, I am to be lured on to offer myself to your precious sister, and then to be laughed at, and scouted for my folly—a folly into which you were drawing me."

"It is false"—that was all Fox could say, so disconcerted, so choked was he with rage.

"It is not false. I have but just come from your house, and saw that, and because I saw it, I made overtures to Anthony to return. It was clear to me that all the fever of fancy for that hussy at Willsworthy was dead as ashes. That the reputation of Julian will need looking to, should he return to me, and be separate from Urith, is naught to me."

"He has enough to answer to me without this," gasped Fox. Then, by an effort, he steadied his voice and resumed his usual manner. "Now," said he, "let us have all brought into measure and rhyme between us. You tell me that Anthony comes back to Hall and abandons his wife."

"Aye! That is my offer to him. Let him leave Willsworthy and return to me, and all shall be forgiven. 'Tis a misfortune that he cannot be rid of his wife, but the tie by law alone will remain. She shall never be mentioned between us."

"And he agrees to this?"

"I have granted him three days to consider. In three days he gives me his answer, but who can doubt what that answer will be? Is not he wearied with his toy? Has he had good cheer at Willsworthy? Has he aught there now to retain him?"

"And what about Bessie?"

"Oh! you are welcome to her, as I said before; but after my death Hall will go to Anthony, only the reversion to thee and any child thou hast by Bess. Should my Anthony survive Urith and marry again,

then to his son by his second wife, never—that I have ever maintained—never to any child of his by Urith Malvine."

Fox laughed contemptuously.

"A poor prospect for Bess and her husband."

"A poor prospect, mayhap, but the only one on which they can look through their windows when they set up house together."

"And what allowance will you make Bessie when she marries?"

"But a trifle—I cannot more."

"So her husband and she are to live on the expectation of succession should they survive Anthony, and should Anthony not be remarried."

"That is all."

"But what if Anthony refuses your offer?"

"Then all remains as before. He will not refuse."

"I will hear that from his own mouth. Where is he?"

"I did not overtake him on the road. He has not yet left the town. I doubt not he has gone to his Aunt Magdalen."

"One word more. Hold up your hand to Heaven and swear that he dared—dared to

put his arms round and kiss my sister! He —he—Anthony Cleverdon!"

"I will do it! It is true!"

Fox remained in the midst of the road, and his hand convulsively caught and played with his hunting-knife that hung to his belt. His red, thick brows were knitted.

As old Cleverdon looked at his mottled face, he allowed to himself that Bess would have bad taste to choose such an one wittingly; and that, unwilling, it would take some compulsion to drive her to accept him.

"And, if Anthony does not come within three days, all remains as heretofore?" again asked Fox, looking furtively up at the father, and then letting his eyes fall again.

"Yes, all as heretofore. Should he dare to disappoint me in this, not a thread from my coat, not a grass-blade from my land, shall fall to him."

Fox waved his hand. "That will do," he said, and turned away.

He was at the junction of the road or track that led from Willsworthy with the main highway along which Squire Cleverdon

had been riding. He remained at this point, waiting till the old man had remounted, and had trotted away, with Bessie behind him. There he stood, still playing with the handle of his hunting-knife, his red, lowering brows contracted over his small eyes, watching till the riders disappeared over the hill. Then he turned along the trackway that led to Willsworthy, with his head down against the drizzling rain, which had come on again, after having ceased for an hour; which came on again thick, blotting out the scenery—all prospect within a hundred feet, as effectually as though veils of white gauze had been let down out of the heavens, one behind another.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

TWO PARTS OF A TOKEN.

Anthony had, as his father surmised, gone to see his Aunt Magdalen. His heart was soft within him—softened at the sense of his own unworthiness, and with the return flow of his old love to Urith. And as he did not desire at once to go back to Willsworthy, and at the same time remembered that some time had elapsed since he had seen his aunt, he went to her house. There he found his grandmother, Mistress Penwarne. Some of the bitterness of the old woman seemed to be rubbed away. Perhaps daily association with the gentleness of Luke Cleverdon had done this.

She was in tears when Anthony entered. Magdalen had been talking with her over the plan mapped out for Bessie, to the

complete, final exclusion of Anthony from return to his father's house.

"Now—now does the righteous God pay back to old Anthony Cleverdon all the wrong he did my daughter," she said. "See—drop for drop of gall. Where there fell one on my child's heart, his own son spirts a drop on to his father's heart. There is retribution in this world."

"Oh, Mistress Penwarne," remonstrated Magdalen. "How can you take delight in this?"

"I delight only in seeing justice done," answered the old woman. "You hold with your brother—naturally—to some extent; but you never loved my daughter. You never showed her kindness——"

"Indeed, now," interrupted Magdalen, "there you do me a wrong. It was Margaret who would not suffer me to enter the house and be of any consequence more in Hall, who withstood me when I would draw near to my brother."

"She had no power to withstand any one. That you know full well. She weighed naught with her husband. But let that be. If you sinned against her, God is bringing the whip down on your shoulders as well,

for I know that what is now falling out is to you great pain and affliction."

"That it is indeed," sighed Magdalen.

"Anthony is used by the hand of Providence as its rod with the father; Heaven rewards on the proud Squire of Hall every heart-ache, every humiliation to which he subjected my child. You know not how I have prayed that I might be suffered to see the day when the rod should fall and beat and bruise the back of the offender."

"You do not reckon," said Magdalen, "that the chief suffering falls, not on my brother, but on your daughter's son. Is not Anthony the very image of his mother? Has he not her eyes and hair—all the upper part of his countenance? Does not her blood run in his veins? You have desired revenge on my brother, and you have got it through the breaking to pieces of your own grandson."

Mistress Penwarne was silent. It was as Magdalen said.

"Yes, and whom does Bessie resemble most? She has none of the handsomeness of your Margaret. It is true that she is her child, but she has inherited the plain homeliness of the Cleverdons. Look at yonder

picture over the mantel-shelf. That was drawn of me when about her age. Does she not so resemble me at that time that you would say she had taken nothing of the Penwarnes, that she was altogether and only Cleverdon? Yet to her will come Hall. She will be mistress there, and to her child it will descend, to the utter exclusion of Anthony. Nay, I cannot think that the judgment of God, to which thou appealest ever, is falling all to thy side in its weighted scale."

The old woman was about to answer, when Anthony entered. He was pale, and his pallor reminded her of her daughter as the wan picture recalled Bessie. Mistress Penwarne rose from her chair and stepped up to him, took him by both his hands, and looked him steadily in the face. As she did so great tears formed in her eyes and rolled down her wrinkled cheeks.

"Ah!" said she, seeing in him her dead daughter, and her voice quivered, "how hardly did the Master of Hall treat her, but Magdalen—aye, and Bessie—know that better than thou. He was rough and cruel, and now thou hast felt what his roughness and cruelty be — now thou

canst understand how he behaved to thy poor mother; but thou art a man and able to go where thou wilt, fight thine own way through the world, carve for thyself thine own future. It was not so with my poor Margaret. She was linked to him—she could not escape, and he used his strength and authority and wealth to beat and to torment and break her. And Margaret had a spirit. Have you seen how a little dog is mended of lamb worrying? It is attached to an old ram—linked to it past escape, and at every moment the ram lets drive at the little creature with his horns, gets him under his feet and tramples him, kneels on him and kneads him with his knees, ripping at him all the while with his horns. Then, finally, the little dog is detached and taken away, covered with wounds and bruises, before the ram kills it. It was so with my Margaret, but she was no lamb-killer—only had a high spirit—and she was tied to that man, your father. He rent her away from Richard Malvine, whom she loved, just because it was his pleasure, and he broke her heart. Look here."

The old grandmother drew from her bosom a token, a silver crown-piece of

Charles I., on which the King was figured mounted on horseback; but the coin was broken, and to her neck hung but one half.

"Look at this," said Mistress Penwarne. "Here is the half-token that Richard Malvine gave to my daughter, and the other half he kept himself. That was the pledge that they belonged to each other. Yet Anthony Cleverdon of Hall would not have it so. He took her away, and on her marriage day she gave me the broken half-token. She had no right to retain that; but with her broken heart she could not part so readily. As if it were not enough that he had torn her away from the man she loved: your father left not a day to pass without ill-treating her in some way. He was jealous, because he thought her heart still hung to Richard Malvine; though, as God in Heaven knows, she never failed in her duty to him, and strove faithfully to cast out from her heart every thought of the man she had loved, and to whom the Squire of Hall had made her unfaithful. As he could not win her love, he sought to crush her by ill-treatment. Now, O my Lord! how it must rejoice my poor Margaret, and Richard also, in Paradise, to think that

their children should come together and be one—be one as they themselves never could be."

She ceased and sobbed. Then, with shaking hands, she put the ribbon to which the broken token depended round Anthony's neck.

"Take this," she said. "I never thought to part with it; but it of right belongs now to thee. Take it as a pledge of thy mother's love, that her broken heart goes with thee to Willsworthy, and finds its rest there; and with it take my blessing."

Anthony bowed his head, and looked at the silver coin, rubbed very much, and placed it on his breast, inside his coat.

"Thank thee, grandmother," he said. "I will cherish it as a remembrance of my mother."

"And tell me," said she, "is it so, that thou art for ever driven away from Hall, that thy father will take thy name, even, and give it to another, and that thou and thy children are for ever to be shut off and cast away from all lot and inheritance in the place where thy forefathers have been?"

"It is even so," answered Anthony. "But, hark!"

A horn was being blown in the street, and there was a tramp of running feet, and voices many in excitement.

"What can be the matter?" exclaimed Magdalen, going to the window. "Mercy on us! What must have taken place?"

Anthony ran out of the house. The street had filled; there were people of all sorts coming out of their houses, asking news, pressing inwards toward the man with the horn. Anthony elbowed his way through the throng.

"What is this about?" he inquired of a man he knew.

"The Duke of Monmouth has landed at Lyme in Dorsetshire. Hey! wave your hat for Protestantism! Who'll draw the sword against Popery and Jesuitism?"

More news was not to be got. The substance of the tidings that had just come in was contained in the few words—the Duke has landed at Lyme; with how many men was not known. What reception he had met with was as yet unknown. No one could say whether the country gentry had rallied to him—whether the militia which had been called out in expectation of his arrival had deserted to his standard.

Anthony remained some time in the street and market-place discussing the news. His spirits rose, his heart beat high; he longed to fly to Lyme, and offer himself to the Duke. His excitement over, the tidings dispelled his concern about his own future and gloomy thoughts about his troubled home. In that home there was at the time much unrest. After he had departed from Willsworthy, Uncle Sol Gibbs had burst into laughter.

"Ah, Urith!" said he, "I hope, maid, thy hand is not hurt. It was not a fair hit. The lad was nettled; he thought himself first in everything, and all at once discovered that an old fool like me, with one hand behind my back, could be at him at every point. Your young cockerells think that because they crow loud they are masters in the cockpit. It disconcerts them to find themselves worsted by such as they have despised. There, I shall bear him no grudge. I forgive him, and he will be ashamed of himself ere ten minutes are past in which his blood has cooled. None of us are masters of ourselves when the juices are in ferment."

He took his niece's hand and looked at the palm; it was darkened across it, by the stroke of the stick.

"So! he has bruised thee, Urith! That would have cracked my old skull had it fallen athwart it, by heaven! Never mind, I kiss thee, wench, for having saved me, and I forgive him for thy sake. Look here, Urith, don't thou go taking it in to thy noddle that all married folks agree like turtle-doves. Didst ever hear me sing the song about Trinity Sunday?

When bites the frost and winds are a blowing,
  I do not heed and I do not care.
When Tony's by me—why let it be snowing,
  'Tis summer-time with me all the year.
The icicles they may hang on the fountain,
  And frozen over the farmyard pool,
The east wind whistle upon the mountain,
  No wintry gusts our love will cool.

That is courtship, Urith—summer in the midst of winter. Now listen to matrimony—what that is:

I shall be wed a Trinity Sunday,
  And then—adieu to my holiday!
Come frost, come snow on Trinity Monday,
  Why then beginneth my winter day.
If drudge and smudge on Trinity Monday,
  If wind and weather—I do not care!
If winter follows Trinity Sunday
  It can't be summer-time all the year.

That's the proper way to regard it. After marriage storms always come; after matrimony nipping frosts and wintry gales. It can't be summer-time all the year. Now just see," continued Uncle Sol, climbing upon the table and seating himself thereon, and then fumbling in his pocket. "Dos't fancy it was ever summer-time with thy father and mother after they were wed? Not a bit, wench—not a bit. They had their quarrels. I don't say that they were exactly of the same sort as be yours, but they were every whit as bad—aye! and worse, and all about this." He opened his hand and showed a broken silver crown piece of Charles I. perforated, and with a ribbon holding it. "I'll tell thee all about it. Afore thy father was like to be married to my sister, he was mighty taken in love with some one else. Well, Urith, I won't conceal it from thee—it was with Margaret Penwarne, that afterwards married old Squire Cleverdon, and became the mother of thy Anthony. Every one said they would make a pair, but he was poor and she had naught, and none can build their nest out of love; so it was put off. But I suppose they had passed their word to each other, and in token

of good faith had broken a silver crown and parted it between them. This half," said Uncle Sol, "belonged to thy father. Well, I reckon he ought, when he married thy mother, to have put away from his thoughts the very memory of Margaret Cleverdon. I could not see into his heart—I cannot say what was there. May be he had ceased to think of her after she was wed to Anthony Cleverdon, and he had taken thy mother; may be he had not. All men have their little failings—some one way, some another. Mine is—well, you know it, niece, so let it pass. I hurt none but myself. But thy father never parted with the broken half-token, but would keep it. Many words passed between them over it, and the more angry thy mother was, the more obstinate became thy father. One day they were terrible bad—a regular storm it was, Urith. Then I took down my singlestick, and I went up to Richard, and said I to him, 'Dick! thou art in the wrong. Give me up the half-token, or, by the Lord, I'll lay thy head open for thee!' He knew me, and that I was a man of my word. He considered a moment, and then he put it into my hand—on one condition, that I should never give it

to my sister. I swore to that, and we shook hands, and so peace was made for the time. There"—— said the old man, descending from the table. "I will give thee the half-token, maid, for my oath does not hold me now. Thine it shall be; and when thou wearest it, or holdest it, think on this—that there is no married life without storms and vexations, and that the only way in which peace is to be gotten is for the one in the wrong to give up to the other."

He put the half-token into Urith's hand.

She received it without a word, and held it in her bruised palm. Her face was lowering, and she mused, looking at the coin.

Yes, he who is in the wrong must abandon his wrongful way—give up what offended the other. What had she to yield? Nothing. She had done her utmost to retain Anthony's love. She had not been false to him by a moment's thought. She had striven against her own nature to fit herself to be his companion. She loved him—she loved him with her whole soul; and yet she hated him—hated him because he had slighted and neglected her at the Cakes, because he was suffering himself to be lured from her by Julian, because he was dissatisfied with his

house, resented against her his quarrel with his father. She could hardly discriminate between her love and her hate. One merged into the other, or grew out of the other.

"Come!" said the old man, looking about for his hat. "By the Lord! the boy has gone off with my wet cap. Well, I shall wear his, I cannot tarry here. I will go seek out my friend Cudlip at the Hare and Hounds. I shall not be late, but I want to hear news. There is a wind that the Duke of Monmouth has set sail from the Lowlands. The militia have been called out and the trainbands gathered. Come, Urith, do not look so grave. Brighten up with some of the humours of the maid, who sang of winter on Trinity Monday. It cannot be summertime all the year—why, neither can it be winter."

Then he swung out of the house trolling:

So let not this pair be despised;
  That man is but part of himself,
A man without woman's a beggar,
  If he have the whole world full of wealth,
A man without woman's a beggar,
  Tho' he of the world were possessed.
But a beggar that has a good woman,
  With more than the world is he blessed.

CHAPTER XL.

"THIS FOR JULIAN."

URITH was left alone looking at the broken token. It did not bring to her the cynical consolation that her uncle intended it to convey. It was not even poor comfort, it was no sort of comfort whatever to learn that others had been unhappy in the same way as herself—that there had been discord between her father and mother. The broken token was to her a token of universal breakage—of broken trust, broken ambitions, broken words, broken hearts—but that all the world was in wreck was no relief to Urith, whose only world for which she cared was contained within the bounds of Willsworthy.

She had dreamed with reverence of her father; but Uncle Sol had shown her that

this father had been false in heart to her mother. Her own story was that of her mother. Each had married one whose heart had been pre-engaged. After a little while, of sincere struggle no doubt, the heart swung back to it oldest allegiance. As Urith sat in the hall window, looking out into the court, her eyes rested on the vane over the stables. Now that arrow pointed to the west! Sometimes it veered to other quarters, but the prevailing winds came from the Atlantic, and that vane, though for a few days it may have swerved to north or south, though for a whole month, nay—a whole spring it may have pointed east, as though nailed in that aspect, yet round it swung eventually, and for the rest of the year hardly deviated from west. So was it with the heart of Anthony; so had it been with the heart of her father. Each had had a first love; then there had come a sway towards another point, and eventually a swing round into the direction that had become habitual.

Fox's words at the dance in the house of the Cakes returned to her:—"You cannot root out old love with a word." With Anthony it had been old love. Since child-

hood he and Julian had known each other, and had looked on each other in the light of lovers. It was a love that had ramified in its roots throughout his heart and mind. It was with this love as with the coltsfoot in the fields. When once the weed was there, it was impossible to eradicate it; the spade that cut it, the pick that tore it up, the sickle that reaped it down, only multiplied it; every severed fibre became a fresh plant —every lopped head seeded on the ground and dispersed its grain. For a while a crop of barley or oats appeared, and the coltsfoot was lost in the upright growth; but the crop was cut and carried, and the coltsfoot remained.

Was this a justification for Anthony? Urith did not stay to inquire. She considered herself, her anguish of disappointment, her despair of the future—not him. With all the freshness and vehemence of youth, she had given herself wholly to Anthony. She had loved—cared for—no one before; and when she loved and cared for him it was with a completeness to which nothing lacked. Hers was a love infinite as the ocean, and now she found that his had been but a love in comparison with

hers like a puddle that is dried up by the July sun.

She did not consider the matter with regard to Anthony's justification, only as affecting herself—as darkening her entire future. The coltsfoot must go on growing, and spread throughout the field. It could not be extirpated, only concealed for a while. She could never look into Anthony's face—never kiss him again, never endure a word of love from him any more, because of that hateful, hideous, ever-spreading, all-absorbing, only temporarily-coverable weed of first love for Julian. An indescribable horror of the future filled her—an inexpressible agony contracted her heart as with a cramp. She threw up her hands and clutched in the air at nothing; she gasped for breath as one drowning, but could inhale nothing contenting. Everything was gone from her with Anthony, not only everything that made life happy, but endurable. Down the stream belonging to the manor was a little mill, furnished with small grinding-stones, and a wheel that ever turned in the stream that shot over it. No miller lived at the mill. When rye, barley, or wheat had to be ground, some person from the house

went down, set the mill, and poured in the grain. Night and day the wheel went round, and now in her brain was set up some such a mill—there was a whirl within, and a noise in her ears. The little manor-mill could be unset, so that, though the wheel turned, the stones did not grind unless needed; but to this inner mill in her head there was no relaxation. It would grind, grind as long as the stream of life ran—grind her heart, grind up her trust, her hopes, her love, her faith in God, her belief in men—grind up all that was gentle in her nature, till it ground all her nobler nature up into an acrid dust.

The day declined, and she was still looking at the broken token.

The mill was grinding, and was turning out horrible thoughts of jealousy, it ground her love and poured forth hate, it ground up confidence and sent out suspicion. She sprang to her feet. Where was Anthony now? What was he doing all this while? He had been away a long time; with whom had he been tarrying?

The mill was grinding, and now, as she threw in the jealous thoughts, the hate, the suspicions it had just turned out, it ground

them over again, and sent forth a wondrous series of fancies in a magic dust that filled her eyes and ears; in her eyes it made her see Anthony in Julian's society, in her ears it made her hear what they said to each other. The dust fell into her blood, and made it boil and rage; it fell on her brain, and there it caught fire and spluttered. She was as one mad in her agony—so mad that she caught at the stanchions of the window and strove to tear them out of the solid granite in which they were set, not that she desired to burst through the window, but that she must tear at and break something.

Why had Anthony marred her life, blistered her soul? She had started from girlhood in simplicity, prepared to be happy in a quiet way, rambling over the moors, in a desultory fashion attending to the farm and garden and the poultry yard. She would have been content, if left alone, never to have seen a man. Her years would have slipped away free from any great sorrow, without any great cares. Willsworthy contented her, where wants were few. She loved and was proud of the place; but Anthony, since he had been there, had

found fault with it, had undervalued it, laughed at it; had shown her how bleak it was, how ungenerous was the soil, how out of repair its buildings, how lacking in all advantages.

Anthony had taught her to depreciate what she had highly esteemed. Why need he have done that?

The wheel and the grindstones were turning, and out ran the bitter answer—because Willsworthy was *hers*, that was why he scorned it, why he saw in it only faults.

She paced the little hall, every now and then clasping her hands over her burning temples, pressing them in with all her force, as though by main strength to arrest the churn of those grindstones. Then she put them to her ears to shut out the sound of the revolving wheel.

On the mantelshelf was a brass pestle for crushing spices. She took it down. Into it were stuffed the old gloves of Julian Crymes. It was a characteristic trait of the conduct of the house; nothing was put where it ought to be, or might be expected to be. After these gloves had lain about, at one time in the window, at another on he settle, then upon the table, Urith had

finally thrust them out of the way into the pestle, and there they had remained forgotten till now. In the train of her thoughts, Urith was led to the challenge of Julian, when she recalled where the gloves were, and these she now took from the place to which she had consigned them.

She unfolded them, and shook the dust from them. Then she stood with one foot on the hearthstone, her burning head resting against the granite upper stone of the fire-place, looking at the gloves. Had Julian made good her threat? Was she really, deliberately, with determinate malice, winding Anthony off Urith's hand on to her own? And if so—to what would this lead? How would she—Urith—be tortured between them. Every hair of her head was a nerve, and each suffering pain.

She lifted her brow from the granite, then dashed it back again, and felt no jar, so acute was the inner-suffering she endured. It were better that Anthony, or she—were dead. Such a condition of affairs as that of which the mill in her head ground out a picture, was worse than death. She could not endure it, she knew—she must go mad with the torment. Oh would! oh—would that

Fox's fuse had been left to take its effect in the ear of Anthony's horse, and dash him to pieces against the rocks of the Walla!

She could no longer bear the confinement of the house. She gasped and her bosom laboured. She put the gloves between her teeth, and her hands again to her head, but her dark hair fell down about her shoulders. She did not heed it. Her mind was otherwise occupied. In a dim way she was aware of it, and her hands felt for her hair, how to bind it together and fasten it again, but her mind was elsewhere, and her fingers only dishevelled her hair the more.

The air of the room oppressed her; the walls contracted on her; the ceiling came down like lead upon her brain. She plucked the gloves out of her mouth and threw them on the table, then went forth.

The rain had ceased. Evening had long ago set in, the twilight struggling through the vapours overhead, and filling all the prospect with a pale filmy light. It was about the time when "Barnaby bright is all day and no night."

"Where is Anthony? I must see Anthony?" Her words were so hoarse, so strange that they startled her. It is said

that when one is possessed, the evil spirit in the man speaks out of him in a strange voice, utterly unlike that which is natural. It might be so now. The old demon in Urith that had gone to sleep was awaking, refreshed with slumber, to reassert his power.

Where was Anthony? What delayed his return? Had he on leaving Willsworthy gone direct to Julian to pour out into her sympathetic ear the story of his domestic troubles? Was he telling her of his wife's shortcomings?—of her temper?—her untidiness?—her waywardness? Were they jeering together in confidence at poor little moorland Willsworthy? Were they talking over the great mistake Anthony had made in taking Urith in the place of Julian? Were they laughing over that scene when Anthony led out Urith for the dance at the Cake's? She saw their hands meet, and their eyes—their eyes—as at the Cake's.

Then there issued from her breast a scream—a scream of unendurable pain; it came from her involuntarily; it was forced from her by the stress of agony within, but the voice was hoarse and inhuman. She was aware of it, and grasped her hair and

thrust it into her mouth to gnaw at, and to stifle the cries of pain which might burst from her again.

She had descended the hill a little way when she thought she discerned a figure approaching, mounting the rough lane. It might be Anthony—it might be Solomon Gibbs. She was unprepared to meet either, so she slipped aside into the little chapel. The portion of wall by the door was fallen, making a gap, but further back grew a large sycamore, out of the floor of the sacred building, near the angle formed by the south and west walls. Behind this she retreated, and thence could see the person who ascended the path, unobserved.

She was startled when Fox Crymes stepped through the gap where had been the door. There was sufficient light for her to distinguish him, but he could not observe her, as the shadows thrown by the dense foliage of the sycamore from above, and the side shadows from the walls, made the corner where Urith stood thoroughly obscure.

She supposed at first that Fox had stopped there for a moment to shake out his wet cloak and readjust it; he did, in fact, rearrange the position of the mantle, but it

was not so as more effectually to protect himself from rain but in order to leave his right arm free. Moreover, after that he had fitted his cloak to suit his pleasure, he did not resume his ascent of the lane to Willsworthy.

For a while Urith's thoughts were turned into a new channel. She wondered, in the first place, why Fox should come to Willsworthy at that hour; and next, why Fox, if Willsworthy should be his destination, halted where he was, without attempting to proceed.

His conduct also perplexed her. He seated himself on a stone and whistled low to himself through a broken tooth in front that he had—a whistle that was more of a hiss of defiance than a merry pipe. Then he took out his hunting-knife, and tried the point on his fingers. This did not perfectly satisfy him, and he whetted it on a piece of freestone moulding still in position, that formed a jamb of the old door, of which the arch and the other jamb were fallen.

This occupied Fox for some time, but not continuously, for every now and then he stood up, stole to the lane, and cautiously peered down it, never exposing himself so

as to be observed by any person ascending the rough way.

The air was still, hardly any wind stirred, but what little there was came in sudden puffs that shook the foliage of the sycamore burdened with wet, and sent down a shower upon the floor. Urith could not feel the wind, and when it came it was as though a shudder went through the tree, and it tossed off the burden of water oppressing it, much as would a long-haired spaniel on emerging from a bath.

Bats were abroad. One swept up and down the old chapel, noiseless, till it came close to the ear, when the whirr of the wings was as that of the sails of a mill.

An uneasy peewit was awake and awing, flitting and uttering its plaintive, desolate cry. It was not visible in the silvery night-sky, and was still for a minute; then screamed over the ruins; then wheeled away, and called, as an echo from a distance, an answer to its own cry.

Fox stood forward again in the road, and strained his eyes down the lane; then stole a little way along it to where he could, or thought he could, see a longer stretch of it; then came back at a run, and stood snorting

in the ruins once more. Again, soft and still, came on a comminuted rain—the very dust of rain—so fine and so light that it took no direction, but floated on the air, and hardly fell. Fox turned to the sycamore tree. No shelter could be had beneath its water-burdened leaves, that gathered the moisture and shot it down on the ground. But he did not look at it as desiring its shelter. He stepped towards it, then drew back; exclaimed, "Ah! Anthony. Here's one for Urith," and struck his knife into the bole. The blade glanced through the bark, sheering off a long strip, that rolled over and fell on the ground attached to the tree at the bottom. "You took her and Willsworthy from me," said Fox, drawing back. Then he aimed another blow at the tree, cursing, "And here is for my eye!"

Urith started back: each blow seemed to be aimed at and to hit her, who was behind the tree. She felt each stroke as a sharp spasm in her heart.

Fox dragged at his knife, worked it up, down, till he had loosened it; then withdrew it. Then he laid his left hand, muffled in his cloak, against the sycamore trunk, and raised his knife again. "That is not

enough," he whispered, and it was to Urith as though he breathed it into her ear. He struck savagely into the side of the tree, as though into a man, under the ribs, and said, "And this for Julian."

Before he could release his blade, Urith had stepped forth and had laid her hand on him.

"Answer me," she said: "What do you mean by those words, 'And this for Julian?'"

END OF VOL. II.

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